

BOUNDARIES & HISTORY IN AFRICA

ISSUES IN CONVENTIONAL BOUNDARIES AND IDEOLOGICAL FRONTIERS

(STUDIES IN HONOUR OF VERKIJKA G. FANSO)



EDITED BY

DANIEL ABWA, ALBERT-PASCAL TEMGOUA,
E.S.D. FOMIN, AND WILLIBROAD DZE-NGWA

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Boundaries & History in Africa: Issues in Conventional Boundaries and Ideological frontiers

(Festschrift in Honour of Verkijika G. Fanson)

Edited by

**Daniel Abwa
Albert-Pascal Temgoua
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Foreword

A University Professor going on a deserving retirement after so many years of research, publications, teaching and supervision of students is like a candle that burnt itself out in order to light many persons. This is precisely what Professor Verkijika G. Fanzo did in the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I, and in many other Universities around the globe, with great humility and dignity. A Festschrift is usually the way colleagues, friends and students recognize and honour an individual in the University tradition. This book for which we are privileged to write this foreword is in his honour by colleagues and former students. It has many and varied essays in the area of specialization of Professor Fanzo; which is boundary history. The contributors to the book have shown in their different and varied chapters that boundary and frontier issues constitute a very interesting area of scholarship in” which scholars of different disciplines are in the habit to explore and exploit. Above all, Professor Fanzo is a Professor of History, and contributors here seem to assert the relevance of history in this global society.

The contributors have not just replicated the retiring Professor, but have highlighted his contributions to professional academics and nation-building through their essays. Thus, in honouring Professor Fanzo, they have also made his contribution better known. The Festschrift has, therefore, added meaningfully to the scholarship in this area of academics. Indeed, some contributors have ventured into some areas of boundary and frontier issues which Professor Fanzo never visited in his so many years of research and many publications on the subject. In other words, his retirement has instead kindled more interest in many other scholars in his field of specialization that belongs to so many academic disciplines.

The rich and varied chapters of the book, which have been thoroughly peer-reviewed, have treated interesting frontier issues. The main themes on which the Chapters are predicated, include; ancient notions and practices of boundary making in Africa; contemporary traditional frontier issues in Cameroon; colonial boundary issues between Cameroon and her neighbours; inter- and intra- disciplinary

frontiers; and frontier issues in politics and cultures. All of these can attract both scholars and lay readers, who are keen in matters which affect their lives directly and indirectly. I therefore, have no doubt that this book will be a wonderful companion for whoever owns a copy.

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An academic venture of this magnitude could hardly succeed without the collaboration of many. The editors of this work wish to thank all those who in one way or the other, helped in the realization of this festschrift. We wish to most especially thank the Rector of the University of Yaoundé I, Professor Oumarou Bouba, first, for accepting our proposals for the organization of, festschrift for Prof. Verkijika G. Fanzo, and, second for the financial, material and moral support that he provided to enable us realize this venture.

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We are equally grateful to all those who spent countless hours to review some of the chapters. Dr. Mathias-Livinus Niba of the University of, Yaoundé I, Dr. Henry Kah Jick of the .University of Buea, Dr. Michael Ndobegang of the Higher Teacher Training College, Yaoundé I, were there to give US the heeded expertise and advice.

To all those who found time to contribute chapters to this work, it was pleasurable reading through their various chapters and correspondences. We deeply appreciate their promptness in reacting to our numerous requests.

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We recognize the various participation in the realization of this festschrift by friends and colleagues of the Department of History,

especially those who attended our weekly meetings carried and appeal letters to and from our benefactors/benefactresses. A representative list includes: Lang Michael Kpughe, Kingsly Awang Ollong, Comfort Sjinkwe Kimah, Lydia Efufa, Charles Ebune and Sylvie Laure Andela, among others.

Last, but not the least, this volume is our own little way of paying tribute to this exemplary scholar, intellectual and man of culture, Professor Verkijika G. Fanson, for his great contributions to nation-building, during his over thirty-six years of active teaching, researching supervising of University students within and out of the country.

Yaoundé, July 2011.

Introduction

In this Festschrift, written in honour of Verkijika G. Fanson, scholars of diverse academic disciplines have joined him and other eminent scholars of boundary/frontier studies in Africa like J.C. Anene¹, A.I. Asiwaju² and others to reiterate the preponderant role which boundary and frontier issues have played and continue to play even today in the history of humankind, be that conventional state boundaries or in the ideological frontiers in different walks of life. For best part of his over 36 years of academic and professional life, V.G. Fanson, was preoccupied with the ways boundaries and related issues have impinged on the histories of different peoples especially in Africa. He published many books, book Chapters and journal articles on boundaries and related histories. In his teaching and supervision of students, he also many with the novelty of this area of human history and it has been, indeed, a bumper harvest. It is in recognition and honour of this great Professor of history, who is taking his deserved retirement from professional routine work, albeit not from academics, that this project undertaken by his colleagues, many them his former students.

The issues raised and treated in this Festschrift are divided into two broad parts. The first part is devoted to the treatment of what we would like to call, conventional boundary issues among peoples of various types of states and polities. It encompasses modern and traditional states and other forms of smaller entities. The authors of the chapters in part one have shown how the concept and practice of boundary making, boundary keeping; boundary disputes and settlements as well as the use of boundary for various purposes, have preoccupied and influenced the history of many a people in Africa. Therefore, issues of conventional historical boundaries constitute an

¹J.C Anene. *The International Boundaries of Nigeria: Framework of an Emergent African Nation*. London: Longman Group Ltd., 1970.

²A.I Asiwaju, *Western Yoruba under European Rule 1889-1945: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism*; London: Longman Group Ltd., 1976; (Ed.), *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations across African International Boundaries 1884-1984*, Lagos: Lagos University Press, 1984.

inexhaustible field of research that attracts scholars of many different types of academic disciplines. The evidence of conventional boundaries or physical frontiers is often easy to come by, but the interpretation like that of other aspects of human history is subject to the depth of knowledge each generation has about the past. In the words of John Edward Philips; “history is a conversation the present holds with the past”³ and as a result, history will always be a work-in-Progress because the “present’ continually preoccupies the new generations.⁴

It is not because conventional state boundary study is limited in scope that we have decided to make ideological or non-physical frontiers the second section of this Festschrift. In doing so, we wish first and foremost to give the work the widest scholarly scope possible so that in this very rare occasion, there can be the opportunity of multi-disciplinary cross-fertilization which Professor V.G. Fanzo, cherishes greatly in his academic pursuit. We intend to show that the importance of frontier issues as an academic venture is not limited to history. In fact, just as frontier issues and their ramifications are many and varied, so are the scholars who exploit them. Thus, the methodology employed in this work is the eclectic and trans-disciplinary. This is vividly shown in the contributions of authors in both sections of the book.

Part I: Conventional Boundaries

This section takes a lead from V.G.Fanzo, who has shown in his many works on conventional boundaries⁵ that European colonial

³John Edward Philip (Ed.), *Writing African History*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006, p4

⁴ Ibid

⁵V.G. Fanzo, ‘Boundary Problems in Africa’ in Frank Th. Gather, Manfred O. Hinz (eds.), *Krisen-Entwicklungen-Konfluensungen*, Bremen, 1991 ,pp55-73;Nso’ and *Its Neighbors: Readings in Social History*, co-edited with B.Chem-Langhee et al, Amherst College Massachusetts, 1996; ‘Interrelationship and, Movements in the Border Zone Before and After Imposition of the Cameroon-Nigeria’ in *Frontières Plurielles, Frontières Conflictuelles en Afrique Subsaharienne*, eds. G. Dubois, M. Michel and P.P.Sounelle, Paris, Harmattan ‘Ethnic Groups and Cameroon- Nigeria Border’ *Tbesaurus Acroasium*, Vol. Xiv (Greece) 1985; ‘Africa Traditional and European and European

boundaries have had profound effects, generally, negative on the history of statehood in Africa as they are generally responsible overtly or covertly for many inter and intra-state conflicts in the continent. This is because many of them were created without due considerations of the traditional state boundaries that pre-colonial African state-builders had made and sanctioned through different types of traditional diplomacy mechanisms. Many of the conventional boundary issues treated in this section of the book appear to buy this contention. Authors of these chapters have treated boundary issues in both modern states which European colonialists created in Africa as well as those among traditional polities in Cameroon. In all, thirteen chapters of the book treat conventional boundary or physical frontier issues. They have done so in three subsections. The first seven chapters, which focus on the effects and ramifications of the European colonial boundaries on Cameroon and her neighbours, while the other six chapters discuss the concept of traditional boundary; the mechanisms which ethnic entities have employed to create, use and maintain boundaries among them. The authors here also treat the effects of boundary and related issues on the histories of several of the many Cameroon ethnic entities.

Cameroon and European Colonial Boundary Issues

Four of the seven chapters treat issues related to conventional colonial boundaries between Cameroon and her neighbours. Three of the chapters are on the Cameroon-Nigerian boundary with emphasis on their troublesome sea boundary around the Bakassi Peninsula. It would be recalled that the two countries came close to a major war over the Peninsula at the close of the twentieth century and it was only the judgment of the International Court of Justice and the Good Office of the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, that brought peace between the two neighbours in that area. Though the area remains volatile, the trouble is more from pirates who are constantly

Colonial Boundaries: Concepts and Functions in Inter-Group, Relations with Special Reference to Southwest Cameroon' *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. Vol.iii, Nos 3&4:1984; "Background to the Annexation of Cameroon 1875-1885" ABIA; *Cameroon Cultural Review*, Nos.29-30, 1975, pp231-280.

harassing people living in the area.

Omololu Fagbadedo Osaretin Idahosa and Egerin Tomwarri and Mark Bolak Funteh in their chapters on the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over Bakassi Peninsula in the southwest long sea boundary between the two countries have tackled different aspects of the dispute. While Mark Bolak Funteh is concerned with how the matter was resolved, Omololu and his co-authors have stressed the effects and the ramifications of Nigeria Ceding Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon. The two chapters are focused, therefore, not on causes and course of this recent colonial boundary dispute, but on its resolution and the aftermath. Funteh sees in the settlement a new dynamic in boundary conflict resolution, while Omololu and his colleagues are apprehensive of the fact that the cession of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon has created Nigeria multiple national problems which are likely to linger for quite a long time.

A different aspect of Cameroon-Nigeria colonial boundary issue treated in this part of the work is the issue of the Boki nation, which is divided by the colonial boundary between the two countries and whose people have never stopped lamenting over the issue. In a chapter on that, Henry Kah and Walter Gam Nkwi have made vivid critique of colonial boundaries from the perspective of the disintegration of many ethnic entities like the Boki, thereby, destroying all of them developing as a people. They show that though the Boki people of Cameroon and Nigeria are conscious of their history and often interact in some cultural and cult matters, the colonial boundary greatly hampers their development. And this is true of the so peoples who were victims of the multiple colonial boundaries between Cameroon and her neighbours.

Other types of colonial boundary related issues are raised and discussed eloquently by Albert Pascal Temgoua, Emanuel Yekong Sobseh and Faustin Kenne in their contributions to the *Festschrift*. Sobseh blames the numerous and rampant ethnic conflicts which have torn apart the traditional polities in the Northwest region of Cameroon on the demise of colonialism. One would immediately construe his sympathy for colonialism from the title of this contribution but the contents belie the title. His contribution intends to show that the ethnic conflicts of today are attempts to correct many ethnic

boundaries which the colonialists distorted. Faustin Kenne's chapter presents a similar argument. It blames the trans-frontier instability in the Central African-sub-region the harassment of local populations by armed men operating across international boundaries with impunity.

But Albert Pascal Temgoua sees frontier trade between Cameroon and her neighbours as a mechanism, through which ethnic peoples divided by colonial boundaries, have employed to circumvent such frontiers in order to create meaningful people-to-people interactions and cooperation outside formal state cooperation. Joseph Nfi's contribution treats the circumvention to the burden of colonial frontiers through cross border trade like that of Albert Pascal Temgoua. But Nfi's focus is on the way frustrated Cameroonians tried to circumvent restrictions on trade by the intra-Cameroon boundary brought about as a result of Cameroon partition after World e through smuggling across the frontier. The general preoccupation of authors in this is with the ways colonial boundary issues and their ramifications have impacted on the history of Cameroon.

African Traditional Past Boundary Issues

Three essays treat the aspect of traditional physical frontier issues in African history. They demonstrate glaringly that boundary making and keeping have been important in the history of the people who inhabited the territory which is called Cameroon today long before European colonial interference that started in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The raised and treated range from the ancient notion and practice of border making and keeping in Africa to contemporary problems which Cameroon is grappling with today as a result one boundary conflict or the other among diverse ethnic entities of this country.

The fact that the notion of boundaries and the problems they create are inherent in African history is shown in three chapters. They include those of Sarr, Fomin & Ngitir, and Temgoua. Sarr's chapter shows that there were frontier conflicts right at the time of the Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt which appear to have tremendously affected political development. In fact, those are the earliest known boundary related conflicts in African history. Fomin & Ngitir and

Temgoua show in chapters two (Fomin & Ngitir) and seven (Temgoua) that boundary making greatly preoccupied the indigenous peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields and has left profound impacts on their different histories. In the chapter on Rituals in Traditional Boundary Making, Fomin and Ngitir show, with several examples, how, the making of traditional state borders with certain rituals, helped to minimize conflicts and eternalize many ethnic boundaries in the Cameroon Grassfields in the past. Temgoua equally highlights in his contribution, the multiple boundary conflicts among Bamileke polities of the western region of Cameroon. He argues that the essence of boundary conflicts in the sub-region was to acquire new territories and populations by upstart chieftains. These authors have convincingly shown that the history of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular has many cases of boundary conflicts which are not of colonial making.

Cameroon Traditional Contemporary Boundary Issues

Three chapters treat different and varied contemporary traditional boundary issues in Cameroon. In chapter one of the book, Willibroad Dze-Ngwa treats a new form of ethnic frontier contest in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. He shows how the ethnic people called Mbororo who have all this while been a classic nomadic group in Cameroon and many other parts West Africa, have in recent years, engaged in a struggle with the indigenous people of the Region and the government administrative agents to claim citizenship of the Region and dire special considerations in representation in the governance of Cameroon at various levels. He argues convincingly that this new conflict is different from the formal one between them, grazers, and the indigenous people who are dominantly farmers (the irksome farmer-grazer conflict of this Region).

Similarly, Robert K. Kpwang shows in his contribution in chapter nine of the book that the handling of the problem of regrouping diverse ethnic entities in Cameroon by authorities that be after independence, leaves a lot to be desired. He shows that there exists a worrisome frontier in Cameroon between what he terms 'l'Homme-tribal et l'Homme-nation au Cameroun après l'indépendance et la

réunification'. Indeed one of Cameroon's major problems in creating viable nation is the difficulties of narrowing ingrained ethnic identities. Gabriel Maxime Dong Mognol in Chapter eight illustrates using the Makenene and Mbangassina ethnic communities in the centre Region of Cameroon the ways inter-community land conflicts have often been resolved peacefully. Land frontier issues are a common phenomenon in the history Cameroon, affecting not only the geopolitical history of the country but also the relations between traditional polities and ethnic communities.

Part II- Frontiers in Academic Disciplines, Politics and Cultures

This section of the Festschrift is devoted to ideological frontiers or non-physic boundaries in academic disciplines, politics and cultures. We use ideology here in the no sophisticated sense of the word. For our purpose, it simply means the way different individual perceived the same values and practices in different domains of academics, politics a cultures. "An ideological thinking or system has come to be considered subjective, no scientific, unrealistic, untruth, biased, partisan, non-pragmatic, closed-terms which obviously denigrate the concept of ideology."⁶ The term as used to caption this section of the work is n intended to reflect any of these negative connotations. It is aimed at demonstrating the fact that frontier issues pervade many spheres of human endeavours. Inter and intra-differences in the above disciplines are what we want to convey to readers in this section. In fact, the usage' ideological frontiers here is intended to eschew philosophical differences of ideas on issues academics, politics and culture and this has been well demonstrated in different chapters of this section. As a matter of fact, V.G. Fanzo is known to have ventured successfully in this type of frontier issues.⁷

⁶Kwarne Gyekye, *The Unexamined Life: Philosophy and the African Experience*, Accra: Sankofa Publishing Co. Ltd, p.20

⁷V.G.Fanzo, 'Anglophone and Francophone Nationalism in Cameroon' in *The Round Table: Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* (1999), Issue 35Opp281-296; 'Intergroup Relations and Cameroon Re-Unification: A Prototype of Africa's Frontier Problems' in Zacheus Sunday Ali (Ed.) *African Unity: The Cultural Foundations*, Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization Lagos, 1988

The main preoccupation of scholars of this section is the extent to which inter and intra frontier issues have affected the lives of individuals, groups and organizations throughout history, however, not always negatively. In fact, ideological frontier issues or rather different points of views on the interpretation of historical facts and disagreements on how certain human institutions should be organized and run have helped advance progress in many walks of life including academic endeavours. Many historians acknowledge the stimulus that a theoretical of departure can offer historical scholarship while resisting the imposition of theory on historical evidence⁸.

It is true that, logically, no two contradictory concepts can both be right; they can both be wrong or one can be right and the other wrong but historical scholarship is not always predicated on rights and wrongs. It is, indeed, centred on adequate explanation of events and actions of humankind based on the evidence available at a given time. Emphasis on the rights and wrongs of human actions is more the preoccupation of ethics and religion. Disputes in history are less often about facts than whether the pertinent facts are sufficient to sustain an interpretation. “And differences in interpretations do not always result in intellectual incompatibility or error”⁹. Thus, the authors of chapters in this section have not set out essentially to emphasize hard and fast frontiers, but to demonstrate that alternative’ views on certain academic, political and cultural issues often result in disagreements which could aptly be called frontiers.

Academic Frontiers

Authors of three chapters treat academic frontiers in three different academic disciplines viz. genetic history; archaeology and literature, all of which are exploited by historians. David Zeitlyn, Neil Bradman, and Krishna Verramah in chapter fourteen show how cross-disciplinary study is becoming increasingly important in the Social Sciences as well as the humanities. The chapter demonstrates vividly how genetic research, which is relatively new in history, is helping to illuminate Nso’ historical research. Similarly Richard Tanto Talla shows

⁸John Edward Philip (Ed.) *Writing African History*, p2-3

⁹*Ibid*,p204

clearly in Chapter Fifteen how the frontier between Archaeology and Anthropology is more an illusion than real. He argues that archaeology is not just one of the sub-disciplines of anthropology but anthropology par-excellence; hence, the subdivision should really not constitute a frontier. He shows how both anthropologists and archaeologists cross one another's path several times in each single meaningful research. He explains that frontiers between archaeology and many disciplines of the social sciences are figments of the imagination of scholars.

Henry Kah Jick's contribution to the argument on frontiers in academic disciplines as is in line with that of Richard Tanto Talla. Jick demonstrates convincingly that history and literature, more specifically, poetry, differ only in the methodology which scholars of the two disciplines employ. The subject matter of history and literature is the society and although exploited from different perspectives, the substance remains basically the same. Using excerpts from many great poets, he shows how poetry could provide historians with useful raw material for reconstructing the past. His chapter like that of Talla emphasizes the narrowing rather than widening of frontiers in academic disciplines.

Frontiers in Politics and governance

Five chapters of this section are devoted to this subsection of the book which treats frontiers and or conflicting views on some aspects of politics and governance in contemporary Africa. In her chapter of the work, Tegna Edith Meireille, shows how Parliamentary frontier between Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon led to a truncated Reunification, thus depriving the nation of the much cherished political unity which was envisaged by the founding fathers of the reunified Cameroon. Similarly, Simon Tata-Ngence shows in chapter six of the book that efforts made towards giving assistance to Africa from persons of African descent in America has not yielded the much needed effects because of multiple frontiers. He sees the absence of democracy, bad governance and neo-colonialism as barriers which have prevented the people of Africa from maximizing the benefit of such assistance. But Tata-Ngence's bleak picture of aid relations between Africa and its multiple Diasporas is mitigated in the bright

picture which Samah Walters paints of aid from Africa to the Caribbean Diaspora in chapter seventeen. He salutes the quick response of many African nations with aid of different types to the victims of the Haiti earthquake of 2010. To him the gesture remains a laudable effort in bridging diplomatic frontiers among Africans in two continents.

Anderson T. Enowkenwa also discusses broadly the gapping of political and diplomatic frontiers in his ambitious topic of Multiple Frontiers of Globalization. Drawing examples from Politics and Diplomacy, he argues that, as far as Africa is concerned, many frontiers still exist today which inhibit her from maximizing the benefits of political and diplomatic globalization. And what appears to be another frontier of political globalization is the issue of security in Central Africa in what the French and Americans were in conflict from 1990 to 2004 as Eric Wilson Fofack has presented in chapter twenty of the Festschrift.

Cultural Frontiers

In all, six chapters of the Festschrift have addressed issues related to cultural frontiers. Three treat issues related to inherent cultural practices which affect gender division of roles in Africa. In his contribution, Andre Tassou shows how the Massa and Toupouri people of Cameroon restrict their women from certain porting activities on the basis of gender roles. Similarly, Fonkeng Epah and Ntem Njang Cecilia underscore in their contribution the gender consciousness that influences the cultural behaviour of the adolescent in Weh Vii/age in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. And as if to buttress this very strong impact of gender division of roles in Africa, Albert Samah also shows in his chapter, how some Christian churches are grappling with the problem of breaking gender frontiers. In fact, authors of cultural frontiers which are treated in this Festschrift have found gender, a very fertile ground.

Nonetheless, Rose Fri-Manyi Anjoh has found frontiers between civilizations of great interest. She shows in her contribution a frontier between the Capitalist based Civilizations of the West and the Islamic rooted one of the Arab North Africa. She explains the fact that the

frontier is long standing and rooted in the inherent conflicting perception of issues of religion, politics, governance and economics by the parties. According to her, the antagonism between the West and Arab world, especially of Africa, is really a conflict of rigid cultural frontiers. Actually ideological frontier issues and their ramifications as shown in this section of the book, can be tremendously many and varied and pervade all areas of human endeavours. Philippe Blaise Essomba evokes in his chapter, interesting multiple frontier issues in World War One battles in Cameroon. He explains how the railway line was a major frontier not only between the warring parties (Britain and France against Germany) but also between the allies, Britain and France. Its importance did not rest on a physical demarcation as such, but on the notion that he who controls the railway, controls Cameroon. It was, therefore, central in the elaboration of the strategies to control different spheres of control of the warring parties in Cameroon.

We have no doubt that readers will find in the many contributions in this book, a wonderful source of information on those issues often taken for granted. The essays are well researched and written in a scientific manner. Though the historical methodology has been employed in writing many of the chapters, some non-historians who have authored chapters in the book, stuck to the methodologies of their disciplines, yet this has given the Festschrift just the pluralism which a work of this nature requires.

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The Man: Professor Verkijika G. Fanzo

By
Willibroad Dze-Ngwa

Introduction

The mysteries of existence include birth, life and death. Life before birth and death are blind truisms of existence. The most complicated truism of existence, ‘to my mind, is life and the way we manage life itself within a bitter-sweet relationship of hate and love. Predominantly, envious, greedy and competitive world, filled with bitter tongues, even against saints¹⁰. Today, have the opportunity to talk about a great man. Most often, such talks are done as eulogies for fallen relations. This explains why it is difficult to talk about “The Man: Verkijika G. Fanzo”, when he is present and in good health. I will adopt the basic principles of “The Five Fs (Fearlessness, Fairness, Frankness, Firmness and Friendliness), which I developed during twenty-one years of close relationship with this great Professor, under whose supervision I have the Masters, MPhil and Doctorate degrees. For nearly thirty-seven-years, Verkijika G. Fan has sailed through an enriching career as a University don, sharing the knowledge in his churning, moulding and laying the foundation of many. From a very humble background, Fan rose to the limelight of academia, taking one step at a time. He remains a great teacher teachers and professors; a pacesetter who made others blossom. Yet, Fanzo remained Go fearing, humble, fearless and non-partisan. He was always beaming with reassuring smile encouraging colleagues and students with warm expressions like “You are great!”, “you are queen”, “you are my king”, “you are a star”, “that is lovely”, and more. Students fondly refer him as “daddy” and colleagues treated him with great respect. He is an exemplary intellectual who did his job with utmost zeal and devotion. Fanzo the teacher researched taught a published on conventional and interdisciplinary boundary issues, with the fervent desire to bridge

¹⁰Oze W. Ngwa, “The Three Truisms”, Yaoundé: 23/10/2002

conflicts emanating from such boundaries. That explains why he established boundaries in his dealings with fellow humankind. He remains a rare Cameroonian Professor who is not involved in partisan politics, probably, because within the Cameroon context, partisan politics rather lead to linguistic, regional and negative ethnicity and conflicts among Cameroonians. To him, every genuine intellectual should be a fearless nation-builder with being partisan. He is retired, but not tired to continue with supervision, research and publication. Prof. Verkijika G. Fanzo remains an exemplary teacher and a great mind. This paper intends to paint a picture of this man with some details.

Early Life

Verkijika G. Fanzo was born to the family of Pa Chrystantus Fanzo and Adela She-eh Kumbo Nso', the former Bamenda (now Bui) Division of the North West Region of Cameroon around the mid-1940s. He attended the St. Theresa's School (STS) Kumbo, and graduated with a First School Leaving Certificate in 1957. In 1964, he graduated with a Teachers' Grade Two Certificate from St. Peter's College, Bambui, Bamenda. In 1966 and 1968 he passed the General Certificate of Education OIL and AIL respectively. In 1969, he obtained the Teacher. Grade One Certificate after a practical teaching examination at the Baptist Teacher's Training College, Soppo.¹¹

As a young man, Fanzo was very active. He was a famous dancer, footballer and athlete. He joined the popular street dance called "*Kosomoodt*", a very popular dance in his community, introduced by the Hausa youth. In 1963, he was selected to join the North West Selected football team, which represented the region in football competitions. In the same year, this young son of Nso' surprised everybody, when he won a gold medal in a national athletics competition in Yaoundé, presided over by the President of the Republic. He fondly remembers how President Ahmadou Ahidjo personally affixed the medal on his chest.¹² It was in this stardom, and with the same spirit of hard work and determination that Fanzo embraced his book work.

¹¹See, Verkijika G. Fanzo, "The Story of My Life", Forthcoming

¹²Interview with Prof. V.G.Fanzo on July 15, 2011, in Yaoundé.

Higher Education and Certificates

In 1970, he and six other Cameroonians were awarded the Canadian International Development Agency scholarships to study at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver, Canada and graduated three years later with a Bachelors of Education degree majoring in History and Anthropology. In 1974, he bagged a Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Birmingham, England. While teaching and researching in Yaoundé, he was awarded the *Doctorat d'Etat (summa cum laude)* with a highly rated thesis on transfrontier relation between Cameroon and Nigeria.

Teaching carrier in Higher Education

Upon his return home, young Verkijika Fanso started his nearly thirty-seven-year long career as a University don, sharing the knowledge in him and laying the foundation of many Cameroonian historians of today. He was recruited at the University of Yaoundé in 1974 as Instructor (Assistant) and in 1976 moved up the ladder to the rank of Senior Lecturer some five years after he was awarded the *Doctorat d'Etat*, degree. He was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of History in 1988 and full Professor of History at the University of Yaoundé 1 in 1999.

It is worth noting that prior to his pursuance of higher education, Verkijika Fanso taught an Elementary School Teacher at the Catholic Parishes of Kumbo and Muyuka between 1964 and 1967. He also served as Tutor and House Master at the famous St. Joseph's College se between 1967 and 1970; an institution that has contributed enormously to the development of Cameroon from 1939 till date.¹³

Administrative Functions

In 1993, Professor Fanso was appointed Vice Dean in charge of Admissions, Records and programming at the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, University of Yaoundé I, a position he handled till 1997. While still serving as Vice Dean he was appointed Director of

¹³Interview with Verkijika G. Fanso on Thursday June 16, 2011 in Yaoundé. Also see CV of Verkijika G. Fanso.

Cultural Heritage in the Cameroon's Ministry of Culture in charge of Archives, Museums, Monuments, National Languages and other services until 1999 when he returned to the University full time.

Fellowships/ Awards/Conferences

In 1993, Professor Fanzo has received many Fellowships and other Awards and participated in several national/international seminars and workshops. He has been: Guest Professor of History, University of Hamburg, Germany, Spring Semester, 1989.

Visiting Professor, University of Buea since 1993

- External Examiner/Supervisor, Department of History, University of Lagos, Nigeria(1986).

- Visiting Professor and External Examiner/Supervisor, International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), University of Yaoundé II since 1988.

- Rhodes Chair Fellow, University of Oxford, England, 1995 - 1996.

- Research Associate at the Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, 1996.

- Visiting Scholar-in-Residence at the Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA, September-October 2004.

- Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, Trident Technical College, Charleston SC, August- December, 2005.

- African Studies Visiting Research Fellow, University of Cambridge, England, UK, October 2009 - March 2010.

- Fellow, Wolfson College, University of Cambridge, England, UK, 2009/2010.⁵¹⁴

Professor Fanzo has participated in uncountable national and international conferences/workshops and seminars on boundary issues, violence along the oil rich We African Gulf of Guinea, Comparative Education, Divination and other exchange programs These have been in Cameroon, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Greece, Holland, Germany, France and United States.

¹⁴See Prof. Fanzo's CV.

Publications

Prof. Fanso has published three books, co-authored and edited many works. He has also published several scientific and academic articles in renowned international Journals. His areas of interest are Boundary Issues, Political History, Constitutional Problems, Crises and; Conflicts, Education, Oral Tradition as a source of History, Divination and Traditional Healing, among others¹⁵.

Membership in Academic Associations

He is member of over fifteen academic associations some of which are: the Cameroon Academy of Sciences, the Cameroon History Society, the Association of African Historians, the Oral History Association, Taxes (USA), the Cameroon International Grassfields Study Group, the Bernard Fonlon Society, Reader and Collaborator of *Abbia: Cameroon Cultural Review*, Reader and Collaborator of *Afrika Zamani*, the Association of Friends of Archives and Antiquities-Cameroon (AFAAC), Africa Network against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuse (ANICHRA) and member of Africa For Research In Comparative Education Societies (AFRICE). He has also been Assessor of History Ordinary Level of the Cameroon GCE Board in Buea.

Supervision

Prof. Fanso has supervised and continues to supervise Masters, D.E.A. and PhD students in the Universities of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II and Buea. He has produced Seven PhD candidates, with several other PhD candidates whose defences are pending. He also taught many of the current Professors of History in our Universities and countless numbers of history teachers in schools and colleges within and without of Cameroon.

¹⁵See Prof. Fanso's CV

Social Life

Prof. Fanso is a member of two large extended families on the father's and the mother's side. It is these extended families, especially the maternal, that looked after him (first born) and siblings (two sets of twins), after the demise of his father. He is married and a father of three Children.¹⁶ As concerns his religious life, he was born into a family of strong Roman Catholic converts and has remained a very committed member of that religion to this day.

Political Life

Like any other Cameroonian Prof. Fanso was very active in the political development of his country, especially during the days of one party system. According to him, "during this period, Cameroonians were more united than during the post-liberty laws period since everyone belonged to the same political, albeit differences."¹⁷ The early 1990s saw the opening of political space in the country with the liberty laws. Fanso continued to make his own contribution in the political game, with the quest to improve on the situation in the country, which was in the heart crises. The introduction of competitive politics rather brought in unfair competition among politicians and political parties, which were rather regionally or ethnically based.¹⁸ The result was political instability with civil disobedience and ghost town operations in the early 1990s.¹⁹

As a frank and genuine intellectual, with the interest of all Cameroonians at heart, Fanso decided to steer clear of partisan politics. On this count, he submits, "I decided to stay out of partisan politics after the 1992 Presidential and Parliamentary elections because I discovered that all those who were involved were interested in their

¹⁶Interview with Prof. Verkijika G. Fanso on May 1, 2011, in Yaoundé.

¹⁷Idem.

¹⁸Willibroad Dze-Ngwa, *National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon, 1961- 2000: Dreams and Realities*", (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Yaoundé I, August 2007. P. 156-157.

¹⁹A.N.T Mbuh, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon* (Bamenda: Imprimerie Georges Frere, 1993).

personal interests, not national interest and development.²⁰ Fanso remained free-minded, fair and frank in the evaluation of politics in the country. He posits that, “my neutrality in partisan politics does not mean that I would not voice out my opinion on political issues that were dividing Cameroonians affecting national interests and development.”²¹ He frequently expressed his opinion on se whenever he was invited by the national and private radio and television stations to discuss them. He has published enormously on issues of national politics.²²

Secret of Good Health

Many a Cameroon are physically tired even before going on retirement, but one could still see Prof. Fanso jog from his Messa residence to the Central Post office Round about and back to Messa on regular basis. He at times run climb the steps of his office in the university to the amazement and amusement of students. Asked about the secret of his good health, Prof. Fanso says, “I never go to bed angry or hungry. I face each day with its challenges as it comes. I speak honestly to friends on issues that concern them and avoid gossiping or meddling in other people’s affairs.”²³ As a God-fearing intellectual, Fanso submits, “I believe that God has a plan for each individual and would maintain that individual in good health until he fulfils that divine plan. So, God alone has granted me some relatively good health.”²⁴

His Legacy

People of great minds hardly blow their own trumpets. To Prof. Daniel Abwa, “Fanso an example worth emulating. He was my teacher and today, he is my friend. He is an exemplary simple man. I can do anything for him.”²⁵ This is a frank appreciation of one professor of

²⁰Interview with Fanso, May 1, 2011.

²¹Idem.

²²See Prof. Fanso’s CV.

²³Interview with Prof. Fanso, May 1, 2011.

²⁴15 Idem.

²⁵16 Informal discussions with Prof. Daniel Abwa on Tuesday July 12, 2011.

History by another. To the Chair of the History Department, Prof. Philippe Blaise Essomba, “Prof. Fanso is a real gentleman”²⁶.

He leaves this to others to judge. But he is proud that he has contributed to the growth and advancement of many Cameroonians in life. He also thinks that his numerous publications on national issues will outlive him and be discussed by students and others after he is dead and gone. He tried to be friendly with every student and colleague without seeing some as Francophones and others as Anglophones in the supervision of their research works and dissertations or theses. He advises that all who hold public offices at the University should avoid claiming to be the know-all and the be-all. They should be fair in the treatment of their colleagues and avoid character assassinations and backstabbing.

Conclusion

From a very humble background, Verkijika G. Fanso rose to prominence due to hard work and focused determination. He bagged certificates from some of the best schools and universities and shared his knowledge through teaching, supervising, mentoring and publishing. He transformed and still continues to transform “narrow” minds into responsible citizenry in order to build a reliable foundation for Cameroon. Fanso remains a great teacher of teachers and professors. His efforts were crowned with fellowships, awards and membership to many renowned academic associations. Yet, Fanso remained very humble. His greatest weakness; however, if that should be considered as such within our context, is that, Fanso does not know how to pretend or tell lies and would not do anything, which is not for the interest of “the other”. What legacy does Prof. Fanso leave behind within the University community? You can judge for yourself. As per his disciples, they will continue to remember his exemplary humility and should strive to remain Fearless, Fair, Frank, Firm and above all, friendly in the discharge of their duties. As one of his disciples, I trust Prof. Fanso will remain evergreen in my mind’s eyes and the knowledge he continues to share, will flow ceaselessly in the veins and

²⁶17 Informal discussions with Prof. Philippe Blaise Essomba, June 16, 2012.

pens of his academic progeny, friends and colleagues. Long live the great teacher!

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Boundary Dynamics and the Search for Geopolitical Space: The Case of the Mbororo in the North West Region of Cameroon

By
Willibroad Dze-Ngwa

Abstract

The migration and settlement of the peoples of Cameroon brought together different conflicting cultures in search for peace and welfare. While most ethnic entities settled in specific locations, others found no separate geographical space, but settled amicably among the autochthons. This was the case with the Mbororo of the North-West Region of Cameroon. However, such amicability soon dwindled resulting in conflicts caused largely by socio-cultural, economic and political rather than geographical boundaries. These boundaries brought misunderstanding, distrust and misrepresentation between the Mbororos and the indigenous peoples. The “early settlers” claimed ownership over land and space and considered the “late settlers” (Mbororo) as strangers who had to pay royalties for land use. The Mbororos on their part decried the attitude of the indigenous peoples as exploitation. With the liberty laws in the early 1990s, the Mbororos wanted to make their voices heard by also claiming indigenous citizenship. The question is, are the Mbororo strangers in the North West Region? What are the boundaries between these people and the local populations? How could the boundaries be ‘owed in order to build greater understanding and peaceful coexistence between the Mbororos and the indigenous people? This chapter seeks to answer these questions and more.

Key Words: Mbororo, Boundary Dynamics, Geopolitical space, early settlers and late settlers

Résumé

Le peuplement du Cameroun qui est l'aboutissement du processus migratoire, a mis en place des ethnies de cultures différentes. Les premiers occupants se sont fixés sur des terres bien précises, et ceux qui sont arrivés tardivement se sont installés parmi eux, et ce de manière pacifique. C'est précisément le cas des Mbororos dans l'actuelle région du nord-ouest Cameroun. Mais la coexistence pacifique n'a été que de courte durée; les préhensions et les incompatibilités, résultat des barrières socioculturelles, économiques; politiques ont très vite conduit à des conflits fonciers entre les autochtones considérés comme propriétaires terriens et les Mbororos considérés à tort ou à raison comme des étrangers n'ayant pas libre accès à la terre. Les questions auxquelles cette étude entend apporter en réponse sont les suivantes: les Mbororos sont-ils des autochtones ou des étrangers dans le nord-ouest Cameroun? Quelles sont les barrières qui font problème entre eux et les premiers occupants? Comment ces barrières « peuvent-elles être minimisées afin d'établir une coexistence pacifique entre ces groupes ethniques ?

Mots clés: Mbororos, dynamisme, frontières, espace géopolitique, premiers occupants, derniers occupants.

Introduction

Modern Cameroon is a bundle of diverse and juxtaposed autonomous cleavages brought together by the German colonizers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The result was that conflicting peoples and cultures were put side by side in search of peace and welfare. While the autochthonous ethnic entities had settled within well-defined territorial boundaries, those who came later settled among the natives with no problems. This was the case with the Mbororo of the present North-West Region of Cameroon. Later, problems emerged due to political, economic and socio-cultural boundaries rather than geographical boundaries. The “early settlers” or the natives claimed ownership over land and space and considered the

Mbororo as strangers, who owed them allegiance for land use. The Mbororos on their part decried the attitude of the indigenous peoples as exploitation and started struggling for space in order to assert themselves as indigenous peoples. This involved advocating for equal rights over land and special political constituencies. We hold the view that, historically, both the indigenous population and the Mbororos of the North West Region are all settlers. While the former were “early settlers” the latter were “late settlers”. Nevertheless, there exist boundaries between the Mbororo and the local populations of the region; and such boundaries could be bridged in order to build greater understanding and peaceful coexistence between the Mbororos and the indigenous people. To ease understanding of the thesis of this essay, principal concepts as used in it, have to be defined in the following section.

Conceptual Framework

The term Mbororo (Bororo) refers to “... all the sub groups of the Fulbe pastoralist’s - *bibbe gassungol*¹. They are known variously as the Nomadic Fulani, Bush Fulani, Cattle Fulani, the *Jafanawa* and the “Bird people” who are always ready to “flyaway” when faced with adversities.

Boundary Dynamics as used here refers to the different perspectives: physical, socio-cultural (including religion, language, education and culture), economic and political boundaries and their evolution over time. Such boundaries can either be concrete or artificial.

The search for **Geopolitical space** refers to the constant struggle to gain and sustain recognition, influence, power and control over defined geographical polities. In the case of the North West Region of Cameroon, the “late settlers” are in an incessant search for geopolitical

¹Constitution and Internal Regulations of the Mbororo Social and cultural Development Association of Cameroon (MBOSCUA): *bibbe gassungol* (Bamenda: MBOSCUA, 1998), p.3.

space while the “early settlers” struggle to maintain control over “their” geographical space and treat the “late settlers” as strangers.

“**Early settlers**” means the indigenous peoples or the natives, who have occupied defined geographical space in the North West Region before the arrival of the Mbororo who can be termed “late settlers”. This latter group had to negotiate with the former in order to be ceded land for settlement and exploitation for which they paid royalties. The Mbororo in North West Cameroon of Cameroon happen to fall within this group. They unfortunately, are scattered throughout the seven administrative divisions in the Region and do not constitute any single polity of their own, hence, were considered as strangers wherever they settled. Can they actually be considered “outsiders”? What have been the boundaries between the Mbororo and the indigenous people? What have been the consequences of these boundaries and what should-be done to .guarantee sustainable peaceful coexistence between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples? After conceptualizing the terms of this research, it would be necessary to know who the people of the study are.

Historical Background

Who are the Mbororo? There are conflicting historical versions as to the origin of the Fulani in general and Nomadic Fulani (Mbororo) in particular. We shall not analyse the conflicting theories here, but it is worth mentioning that Sir H. R. Palmer, C.K. Meek, F. W Taylor, Dr. M.W.D. Jeffreys, F.W. St. Croix all disagree as to the origin of these people.² However, geomorphologists speculate that the long-horn cattle Fulani originated from “the North African littoral and much of what is now Sahara [formerly] grass-covered Savannah lands in comparatively recent times and the mid-Eastern or Asiatic³. Both the Nomadic Fulani (Mbororo) and town Fulani “have wandered with their cattle in the wide Savannah lands between the Gambia and Damagaram. Another

² The Status of the Fulani Regarding Land Tenure in the Bamenda Division. File W. 100068, Vol. Ill. The Grazing of Cattle. Cameroon Province: 1102/49, p.1 NAB.

³ *ibid*

school of thought holds that, “.....the Fulani have at least passed through, if not originated from, the valley of the Nile, and moved to the Western Sudan by way of the then grass-lands to the North of Timbuktu”.⁴

Another version traces their origin in the Senegambia area, and that they migrated from the west to the east along the savannah belt and arrived in the Adamawa region from Bornu through the Hausa land and the Benue valley. They arrived Adamawa in sub-ethnic groups such as the *Mbewe*, *Ngara’n* or *Ferobe*, *Wollarbe*, *IIIga’en*, *Ba’en*, *Jafu’en* and *Kiri’en*.⁵ According to some traditions, “Fulani migrants left Futa Toro and Macina towards the east between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. By the fifteenth century there was a steady flow of Fulani migrants into the Hausa land and Bornu.”⁶ When they arrived Northern Nigeria, they infiltrated the towns of the Hausa land and eventually overthrew the original rulers. According to Jalo Buba Amadou:

The advent of Islam, European expansion, and the colonization of Africa, together with the introduction of organized trade, academic centres and modern technology, paved the way for a more sedentary (settling in one area) life style in “many African traditional societies. The Mbororos proved to be faithful to their nomadic life style and so preferred to herd their cattle on the savannah plateaux. Their brothers, the Mbewe, Ngara, etc., adopted a sedentary life style characterized by an organized local rule. (They founded towns like: Rai, Ngaoundere, Banyo, etc.). Unlike them the Mbororos have a loose traditional leadership and limited western and Islamic education.”⁷

⁴ ibid

⁵ M.Z. Njeuma, *Fulani Hegemony in Yola (Old Adamawa), 1,802-1902* (Yaoundé: CEPER, 1978), pp. 3-4.

⁶ ibid, p. 4

⁷ Jalo Buba Amadou, “Are the Mbororos Fulanis, Fulbes, Hausas?” in *Mbororo: How Protected is the Minority Group?* (Bamenda: INADES-Formation Quarterly No. 37 April-June, 2001), p. 7.

It is important to state here that although they are all Fulani, there is a slight difference between the Mbororo (nomadic Fulani) and sedentary or town Fulani. The interest in this work is on the Mbororo.

The nomadic nature of the Mbororo has historic connections. According to a Fulani legend, the Mbororo refused to assist Dan Fodio during his Jihads against “unbelievers” and were cursed to remain nomadic. The Mbororo:

... were asked to take part in the Jihad, but consulted their wives before committing themselves. The women counselled non-participation: there were many rich herds to be lost and there was but little prospect to gain. The men did as their wives advised. Dan Fodio cursed them in his anger at their refusal: *they would forever wander without lands of their own and would always be subjected to the domination of their womenfolk.*⁸

The Mbororo wandered and settled at Jafan (near Kano) hence, the name *Jafanawa*. Their non-cooperation with Dan Fodio, the incidence of cattle disease and the changing conditions introduced in the Northern Emirates by British colonial rulers caused the south-eastern migration of the Mbororo and their herds by 1875. They trickled into the Cameroon Highlands by the close of the First World War. By 1923, their number in the area had increased.⁹ The Mbororo migrated from Jafan, passing through the Obudu District of Ogoja Province into Mamfe, and Kumba¹⁰, while others passed through Bornu, Ngaoundere and Banyo.¹¹

The Mbororo in Cameroon were further divided into clans: the *Jafun* who reared large dark-brown cattle and the *Aku* who rear small

⁸The Status of the Fulani Regarding Land Tenure in the Bamenda Division, NAB. p.1

⁹ *ibid.* p.3.1

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹Lucy Davis, “Opening Political Space in Cameroon: the Ambiguous response of the Mbororo”, in Review of African Political Economy No. 64: 213-228 (ROAPE Publications Ltd, 1995), p.217.

white black-nosed cattle.¹² The first groups of Mbororo to enter the present North West Region were the *Jafun*, who came to the region shortly after the First World War and established the first settlements in the Bamenda area. This settlement was later named “Sabga” after the first leader of the Mbororo in the area. The rich ecological conditions of the Bamenda highlands attracted more Mbororo into the area with their cattle.¹³ For effective administration, the British Colonial authorities appointed Ardo Abdulahi Sabga of Sabga in Babanki Tungoh as the supreme leader of the Mbororo throughout British Southern Cameroons. This was because he had established a good working relationship with the Germans, and later, the British colonial authorities¹⁴. At the turn of the twenty first century, the Mbororo in Cameroon were represented by the *Goshi*, *Tukanko'en*, *Majanko'en*, *Autanko'en* and *Rumjimanko'en*, among other Mbororo clans. It is worth noting that the Fulani (both Mbororo and Town Fulani) are also found in “... some twenty [African] nations. With the possible exception of Liberia, these include all nations from Mauritania and Senegal to the Republic of Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya.”¹⁵ Their total population in the early 1990s was some nine hundred thousand.¹⁶ These Mbororo found it increasingly difficult to freely interact with the various indigenous people wherever they settled particularly in the North West Region of Cameroon and beyond, hence, creating sociological barriers between them and the indigenous people.

¹²ibid.

¹³Michaela Pelican, “Mbororo Claims to Regional Citizenship and Minority Status in North-West Cameroon” in *Africa* 78(4), 2008, p.542.

¹⁴Adu Rhamani, “The Political and Socio-Economic History of the Fulbe (Mbororo) in Mezam Division in the Twentieth Century (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Yaoundé I, 2004)’ p.12.

¹⁵Charles Frantz, “Are the Mbororo’en Boring, and Are the Fulbe Finished?” in ‘Unity and Diversity, Paul K. Eguchi and Victor Azarya (Senri Ethnological Studies 35: National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, Japan, 1993) p.17.

¹⁶prantz, “Are the Mbororo’en Boring” in *Unity and Diversity*, p.15.

Boundaries between the Mbororo and Indigenous Peoples

As indicated above, there are boundaries between the Mbororo and the indigenous people, some real and others imaginary. These boundaries include geographical, socio-cultural, political and economic cleavages.

Geographical Boundaries

The indigenous peoples live in the various *fondoms* and chiefdoms in the Region. They include the Aghem, Tikars, Widikum, Nso, Wimbun, Kom among others, and constitute autonomous geographical polities. These peoples “entertain strong political, economic and religious bonds with their settlement area based on kinship in chiefdoms, ancestral ties, and the land’s ritual topography. They thus consider themselves “natives” and “guardians of the land.”¹⁷ The Mbororo on their part, are scattered throughout the seven administrative in the Region. They were largely found in Boyo, Bui, Donga/Mantung, Menchum, Mezam, Momo and Ngoketunjia Divisions and had been considered as strangers wherever they “There are therefore, none existing administrative and geographical boundaries between the Mbororo and the rest of the peoples *per se*, but socio-cultural, economic and political les are apparent, albeit artificially or naturally.

The Mbororo argue that they were unable to establish permanent settlements, which they could call theirs and that even though they had stayed in some localities for about a century: they are still treated as intruders or as strangers by the indigenous peoples. This argument arose because of the gradual change of the Mbororo from the nomadic to a sedentary indigenous people on their part consider the Mbororo as landless intruders in search of land, who moved away whenever the pastures were exhausted. It was argued:

¹⁷ Pelican, “Mbororo Citizenship in Cameroon”, p.542.

The Jafan Fulani [Mbororo] look upon themselves as the bird people: they are wild and free d easily scared away. Like all Nomads, they prize liberty above earthly possessions. This can be appreciated: the welfare and safety of their herds - and subsequently of themselves ends on the continued freedom to move whenever the circumstances demand.¹⁸

To corroborate this view, Njeuma submits:

The number of years they [Mbororo] stayed on one spot was often dictated by two conditions- the reaction of the earlier settlers in the locality to their presence, and how satisfactory the conditions, for example, availability of pasture, were for their cattle.¹⁹

However, with the shortage of farming and grazing land for both the Mbororo and the indigenous people due to increased population, there was need for these “bird people” to have permanent grazing and settlement lands. The British colonial authorities in Cameroon, in order to change the nomads to permanent settlers, improved the quality of their cattle and preserved land, and at the same time protected the rights of the natives through mapped out strategies. The Mbororo gradually departed from their “bird life”, especially as a result of the increasing need for education, good health services and accessible markets for their products. In order to be well settled, the Mbororo depended on four factors: political, economic, social and natural factors. Politically, the government’s manner of handling the farmer-grazer conflicts should be unbiased. Economically, taxes should not be so high as to discourage cattle farmers, “market locations should be accessible. Socially, there should be good relations with the indigenous people and good veterinary services for the cattle. Naturally, grazing land, water and salt should be available, while diseases should be

¹⁸1The Status of the Fulani Regarding Land Tenure in the Bamenda Division, NAB, p.4.

¹⁹Njeuma, Fulani Hegemony in Yola, p.8.

checked.²⁰

Throughout the colonial and the post-colonial periods, various attempts were made to encourage free interaction of the Mbororo with the indigenous people. The Mbororo were times given equal rights and obligations as citizens or indigenous peoples. In this connection, Mr. F.R Kay, Senior District Officer for the Bamenda Division stated in 1947:

... the Fulani are not alien intruders but genuine, though late-coming, members of the indigenous population ... The indigenous population of Bamenda mostly reached here only about 150 years ago: the Fulani arrived 25-30 years ago ... the Fulani are here to stay for the simple reason that there is nowhere else for them to go. So taking the long view they are going to be, if they are not already, part of the indigenous population.²¹

Judging from the above quotation, the indigenous people have inhabited the North West Region for over two centuries, while the Mbororo have been in the region for about a century. By implication, the Mbororo should not be treated as “foreigners” but as “late-comers”, considering the history of migration and settlement of the peoples of Northwest Cameroon. Given that the Mbororo were “late comers”, who had come to stay, they needed land. However, most of the land, especially in the Bamenda highlands, according to native law and customs, was already used up and controlled by the natives. The Mbororo could only acquire land from the indigenous people through their chiefs or rulers. These local chiefs were ready to cede land to the Mbororo people on condition that the latter recognized and accepted the authority of the grantor, failure to which the “late comer” could be evicted. Generally, the Mbororo

avoided conflicts especially in those areas where they were in

²⁰The Status of the Fulani Regarding Land Tenure in the Bamenda Division, NAB, p.4.

²¹ p.9.

the minority, or where the local populations were organized in a strong centralized government around a divine chieftainship, or fetish. The Fulani *Ardo'en* developed good working relationships with the local peoples even before they moved into a neighbourhood, and this sometimes involves giving and sometimes exchanging presents with the neighbouring village leaders.²²

Through such mutual agreements, the Mbororo were leased large parcels of grazing land and some of their leaders (*ardo'en*) were co-opted into local traditional councils. Before long, some of the Mbororo stealthily started acquiring land titles with the connivance and complicity of some traditional rulers and government officials, naturally, to the chagrin of the local chiefs who could not challenge such residential titles.²³ Glaring examples include the cases of the Ardo of Sabga and the Ardo of Wum, among others. The Mbororo ceased to consider themselves simply as bird people who were useful only because of the *Jangali* taxes they paid to swell up the administrative treasuries. They started claiming the same rights as the indigenous people and, therefore, rights over land and power positions. This view was supported by Mr. N. Clarke, Veterinary Officer Jakiri during the British colonial period, who submitted 'that the Mbororo were not only a " ... great capital asset but an asset in danger of wasting because of rapid damage that uncontrolled grazing was doing to the highlands ... they were also undoubtedly a considerable political liability."²⁴ Despite these claims, it is clear that any secret transformation of leased land to private ownership was simply bad faith, hence, the deteriorating relations between the Mbororo and the indigenous people from cordiality to conflict and suspicion.

²²Njeuma, *Fulani Hegemony in Yola*, p.8.

²³The Status of the Fulani Regarding Land Tenure in the Bamenda Division, NAB, p.9.

²⁴ *ibid.* pp.7 - 8.

Socio-Cultural Boundaries

Other factors that fuelled the Mbororo-indigenous boundaries have been socio-cultural. The initial inability of the Mbororo to freely interact with the local populations elicited stigmatization from the non-Mbororo. Wherever they settled, clear-cut distinctions were made between them and the 'Natives', be it in religion, language, level of literacy or in their *Pulaaku Code*. Generally, the Mbororo speak *Fulfulde* and practice Islam as a religion although with some minor differences in the mode of worship. On the other hand, the indigenous people spoke their different indigenous languages. As per religion, the indigenous people are largely Christians, divided into the various denominations- Catholics, Protestants, Baptists, and Pentecostals. Some practice their local traditional religions while a few are Muslims.

Due to these differences, the Mbororo generally claimed superiority over the indigenous people, thus promoting dichotomy. According to Lucy Davis:

The dichotomy allows the "Fulani" to maintain their claim of racial and cultural distinction (as does the more derogatory Fulfulde term *haabe* for farmers), and allows the "Natives" to regard the "Fulani" as foreign immigrant with less right to land than themselves. The Mbororo have traditionally maintained a distance from their settled "black" "Native" neighbours, viewing their farming activities with silent disdain. The distinctive physical appearance of the Mbororo (Pale skinned, tall, slender and long nosed) is an important feature of their traditional identity and they are at pains to distinguish themselves from other neighbouring ethnic groups. They have been largely endogenous, marrying often within their own clan to prevent division of their wealth and protect bloodlines.²⁵

Their code of behaviour (*Pulaaku*) further compounded the way in which the Mbororo treated the natives. This code required of the

²⁵Davis, "Opening of Political Space in Cameroon", p.218.

Mbororo to exhibit “ ... a profound, racial otherness, ;reserved pride, a sense of shame, discretion, self-control, not raising ones voice or rising to a conflict, not showing others what one has in mind or revealing one’s real desires. This code made the Mbororo to feel different and independent hence, they distanced themselves from non-Mbororo. Lucy Davis posits:

Some members of Mboscuda ... appeal to common feelings of Mbororo racial superiority, glorifying the physical attributes of a people who would never marry a member of the other, “Native”, groups and whose traditional society was based upon a cultural resistance to a *hostile world outside*. *Whilst trying to restore pride in ethnic identity, these sentiments could develop chauvinist overtones.*²⁶

Wakili Sale supported this view of the Mbororo being “different” from the native populations. He submitted:

I was born in Wum, so I am an *Aghem* man. I don’t have anywhere else to call my home. My children are all *Aghem*. However, although we interact every day, we are different from the native *Aghem* people. For example, our children cannot get married to the natives, unless they pledge to practice the Islamic religion. If you are not a Muslim, you can only marry my daughter by corrupting her or through the use of force. Should that be the case, then such a marriage will never have my blessings.²⁷

Effective interaction between the *Aghem* natives and the *Aghem* Mbororo, therefore, remained desultory as religion established permanent social boundaries between the indigenous people and the Mbororo. There was barely coexistence between these *Aghem* people and the Mbororo. Social tension prevailed especially with the endemic farmer-grazer conflict in the area. According to Alhadji Musa Nyako of

²⁶26 ibid, p.226. Emphasis is mind.

²⁷ Interview with Wakili Sale on December 17, 2005, in Wum, (Age, 45). Aghem refers to Wum Town, in Menchum Division.

Nkambe:

We interact freely with the natives, but they do not consider us as part of them despite all our efforts. Many of the native people of Donga-Mantung Division share the Islamic religion with us and even get married to our children,(except those natives who do not worship in the Muslim tradition), but they treat us as strangers whenever there is a small misunderstanding among us.²⁸

Lucy David further points out that because of the *pulaaku* code the “Mbororo people have traditionally remained geographically apart from rural centres and detached from other Mbororo as necessary for their form of pastoralism, living with their close family in small cluster of huts, in the hills.”²⁹ This code made the Mbororo very resistant to free interaction with the non-Mbororo (*haabe*). As far back as the early 1940s, several attempts were made to give the Mbororo some education. This education was essentially:

... to teach them up-to-date methods in respect of the occupation which they follow, namely the keeping of cattle. This could include the preparation of milk products, the diagnosis and the treatment of the cattle and horse diseases, the differentiation between dairy and be cattle and the improvement of breed in each direction, and the conservation an improvement of pastures. As regards the three Rs, it would undoubtedly be to their own advantage and to the advantage of everyone if they could be taught to speak, read and write English and to keep simple accounts, but with the exception of those of them who elect to take up specialized lines such as veterinary profession... Knowledge of marketing and accounting would be a good thing for them and protect them against the impact of modern influences.³⁰

²⁸ Interviews with Alhadji Musa Nyako on December 27, 2005, in Nkambe (Age, 65).

²⁹ *ibid*.

³⁰ Education of the Nomadic Bororo, File No 79124, NAB.p.1.

It was, however, difficult to carry out this education plan for the Mbororo even when attempts were made to carry out such plans in large Mbororo centres.

The “backwardness” of the Mbororo in formal education and their *Pulaaku* code of behaviour further distanced the Mbororo from the indigenous peoples. According to Charles Frantz, the “Mbororo are often conceived in stereotypic terms to be noisy, thieving, shameless, dirty, distrustful, ignorant, illiterate, unstable, inefficient, superstitious, and destructive of natural resources”.³¹ This stereotyped conception of the Mbororo is not altogether accurate due to current dynamics. Although they had not departed from the *Pulaaku* code, they have greatly improved their lot in organization, permanent settlement, education and profitable economic activities, hence bridging the social boundaries.

Economic Boundaries (Artificial)

Economically, while the Mbororo from the onset were largely cattle farmers, their indigenous counterparts were largely an agricultural population. The economic activities of the Mbororo placed the North West Region second only to the Adamawa Region in the production of cattle in the country. This difference in economic activities was a mixed blessing in the region as farmers and grazers complimented each other. The Mbororo provided meat and dairy while the indigenous peoples provided the food stuffs. Initially, this led to friendly exchanges and peaceful coexistence. But the persistent farmer-grazer struggle over limited farmland marred this relationship. It hampered the initial collaboration between the “early settlers” who claimed ownership of the land and considered the Mbororos as land grabbers; and the “late settlers” who were struggling for geopolitical space.

However, with the dynamics of human interest, these economic boundaries are giving way. Although the Mbororo were initially not

³¹ Frantz, “Are the Mbororo’en Boring?” in *Unity and Diversity*, by Eguchi and Azarya, p.22.

interested in farming, the decline in their cattle and wealth forced them to become involved in agriculture like the indigenous communities. On the other hand, some indigenous people also developed interest in cattle rearing, bought and owned cattle and even recruited some Mbororo as their herdsmen. Ex-Prime Minister, Simon Achidi Achu's Rock Farm in Santa is a good example with both indigenous and Mbororo people working together³². The Mbororo and non-Mbororo now go to the same schools, consult in the same hospitals, are motor-taxi, taxi and bus drivers; and are farmers and businessmen. The economic boundary between the Mbororo and the indigenous people is fast fading away but for rivalry over land ownership. Interested and able Mbororo and the indigenous populations therefore got involved in both raising cattle and food crops. The Mbororo were also slowly and steadily developing serious political concerns in the region.

Political Boundaries

The Mbororo in the North West Region argue that they are marginalized politically. They claimed under-representation or no representation at all, in local councils, in the legislature and other top government positions, even though they constitute a reasonable proportion of the population of the region and contribute enormously to the region's economic prowess. The argument is sound because for over a century no Mbororo from this region ever occupied the position of Minister, Governor, Parliamentarians or even Council Mayors. This was largely due to the low level of formal education, the lack of a geopolitical space and their inability to identify themselves as indigenous peoples. But again, it is not wise enough to appoint people just for the sake of it, without any political base and no geographical entity. On the other hand, this argument is baseless because not all the ethnic groups in the region have benefited from such appointments. The great majority of large ethnic groups with well-defined

³² Dze-Ngwa, Willibroad, "National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon, 1961-2000: Dreams and Realities", (Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, University of Yaoundé I, 2007), p.239. .

geographical space never had such appointments as claimed by the Mbororo. As indicated earlier, no matter for how the Mbororo may be settled in their different settlements in the North West Region, they have often manifested more solidarity with other Mbororos out of the region or even out of the country than with the indigenous peoples. This is very clear when the membership of MBOSCUDA is considered. Paradoxically, many Mbororo do not get involved in associations in areas which host them.

Because of no geopolitical space, the Mbororo have not been able to found exclusively Mbororo political parties. This lack of exclusively Mbororo political parties caused most of them to vote or support parties representing their interest (principally Islam). Most of them joined distant-based political parties, far away from their areas of settlement. This increased their level of non-representation. In support of this view, the leader of the SDF party, Ni John Fru Ndi points out:

We fight for them [the Mbororo] but they don't support us at election time. They vote for Bello Bouba instead. We help them in their problems with corrupt members of the government! We intervene on their behalf in land disputes- our lawyers speak for Mbororo wrongfully imprisoned! - But they do not trust us! They are so adapted to corruption! They don't understand that we can help without them giving us bribes.³³

The Mbororo believe that they are subjected to exploitation, oppression, humiliation and marginalization as a result of their peculiarities -nomadic and pastoralist way of life, illiteracy, ignorance and lack of guidance and cooperation.³⁴ This belief created an artificial boundary between the Mbororo and the earlier settlers. According to Lucy Davis:

The problems facing the Mbororo today are a combination of the inescapable influence of outside political and economic

³³Cited in Davis, "Opening of Political Space in Cameroon", p.224.

³⁴Constitution and Internal Regulations of MBOSCUDA .p.3.

pressures and the apparent inability of Mbororo society to counter these pressures or resolve the problems that they create from within [themselves].³⁵

The Mbororo support for the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP) party, it could be argued, was based on the stronger Muslim following of that party as opposed to the SDF. Religious rather than regional Solidarity, therefore, came to the forefront in determining the political choice of the Mbororo. Fru Ndi's assertion was, however, rejected by Ardo Sule, leader of over the 2000 Mbororo in the Upkwa, Sanqwa, Waindo, Wanangwen and Menchum Valley Sub Division (Menchum Division). According to Ardo Sule:

Election results from polling stations with a large Mbororo population have shown that, the Mbororo, (I prefer the appellation, Fulani), do not vote for distant political parties because of religious affiliations. We vote for people we know and for political parties that understand our problems. Even in a football match it is natural that you support the team from where you come from. We, therefore, support the political parties around us. Those who live with us know and understand our problems better, so we vote for them!³⁶

Reacting to the fact that the Mbororo were strangers in Donga-Mantung Division, Alhadji Musa argues:

It was unfortunate to think we are strangers here. Truly, we have settled here for at least eighty years. Some of us were born here and we shall live, die and be buried here. We do not have any other home. We take part in all the political, economic and social evolution of this Division, so we are not strangers³⁷.

³⁵Davis, "Opening Political Space in Cameroon", p.218.

³⁶Interviews with Ardo Sule on December 17th, 2005, in Wum (Age, 51).

³⁷ibid.

The Mbororo remained very sceptical about the indigenous populations wherever they settled and even towards the central governments of state. This situation is not unique to Cameroon Frantz argues that the cautious attitude of the Mbororo towards the indigenous populations and the central government has made them to be “... given less attention by other Africans government officials and outside scholars.”³⁸Frantz further states:

In most areas, Fulbe have been under - represented in councils and in civil services, mainly because of their lower levels of formal education. Much Fulbe political influence however, has been exerted through patron - client ties, particularly at the local levels. Everywhere the Mbororo'en have been politically weak, even when helped by sympathetic sedentary Fulbe.³⁹

It is for this lukewarm attention from both the indigenous populations and the governments that the Mbororo are searching for political space.

The North West Mbororo and the Search for Geopolitical Space

The Mbororo in general and those of the North West Region in particular, have reacted differently to the perceived boundaries between themselves and the indigenous peoples, despite government efforts to establish amicable co-existence among them. They have reacted through protest letters and memoranda, formation of pressure groups, agitation for land ownership, open confrontations and demands for ethnic citizenship.

Protest Letters and Memoranda

The Mbororo protested against the early settlers who continued to

³⁸Frantz, “Are the Mbororo'en Boring?” in *Unity and Diversity*, by Eguchi and Azarya, p.11.

³⁹ibid. p. 19.

consider them as aliens, especially in areas where they had lived for long, like in Babanki- Tungo, Sabga, Santa, Nkambe and Wum, among others. In fact, “in 1948 the Mbororo, led by Lamido Sabga, presented a bitter memorandum ... to the United Nations Mission, protesting against the description (aliens).”⁴⁰ The Mbororo were increasingly becoming more sedentary than nomadic.

They were interacting freely with different peoples and cultures. In recent times, an increasing proportion of Mbororo’*en* live near cities and towns in order to help fill the rising demands for milk and meat.”⁴¹ Those in Santa and Sabga near Bamenda and those of Wum and Nkambe good examples. They increasingly competed for land, political and economic power. They do not have the opportunity to gain political power probably because they were largely illiterates still considered themselves as different from the others with whom they interacted with at reservations.

Formation of Pressure Groups

The Mbororo have also created pressure groups like MBOSCUDA and SODELCO to assert themselves and struggle for recognition and space. The Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association of Cameroon -*bibbe gassungol*, (MBOSCUDA), was founded in May 1992 to fight for their rights. The principal aim was to assert the position of the Mbororo within the national polity, redefine their priorities as a people, as well as curb ignorance and illiteracy. The other aims of MBOSCUDA were to:

(i) reinforce unity ties between its members, as well as with other peoples, through discussion, cooperation, social integration and tolerance;

(ii) Promote the economic, social, and cultural development of the Mbororo especially the women with the view to ameliorating their

⁴⁰Amadou, “Are the Mbororos Fulanis, Fulbes, and Hausas?” in Mbororo: How Protected is the Minority “Group?” p.7.

⁴¹Frantz.” Are the Mbororo’*en* Boring?” p.17

standard of living;

(iii) Promote the education of the Mbororo especially the youths;

(iv) Improve upon agro-pastoral practices to ensure maximum protection of their environment as well as contribute and participate in all possible undertakings aimed at a better management of grazing lands and the environment;

(v) Promote any form of cooperation with any person, individual or corporate, who can help in the realization of the Association's aims and objectives.⁴²

According to Lucy Davies, the activities of MBOSCUDA were:

influenced by the fast moving political changes in the towns, foreign radio programs about social movements in Nigeria and equivalent movements for minority rights in the North West Province, such as Anglophone Movement. MBOSCUDA is struggling to encourage communication between Mbororo peoples and discussion of the threats facing Mbororo society on a local, regional and national level'.⁴³

This is clear indication that political changes and minority rights movements the world over, encouraged the Mbororo to reconsider their minority problem and seek redress. The aims of SCUDA and SODELCO reveal that the Mbororo were no longer a "flyaway" people, but had become permanent settlers on the lands they occupied.

These pressure groups also got involved in clarion calls for a special status in parliamentary representation and appointments to public offices. The call for the special status necessitated by the fact that during elections, their numerical weakness never won for them active representation. Agnes Gamini nee Tiani-Patipe, delegate of INADES-Formation, insists that:

The Mbororos are not to be looked upon as a people from a

⁴²Constitution and Internal Regulations of the Mbororo Social and cultural Development Association of , Cameroon, p.5.

⁴³Davis. "Opening of Political Space in Cameroon".p.225.

strange planet. No! Those of them who live in Cameroon are not foreigners nor do they belong to a tribe that has to be shun, despised and cheated. The Mbororo have a right to be here and they must be given equal opportunities to progress in society like those of other ethnic groups.⁴⁴

These arguments have caused the Mbororo to acquire permanent settlements and investments in order to be considered as indigenous peoples. However, in order to be given equal opportunities, the North-West Mbororo must rise and identify themselves with and remain loyal to the plight of their adopted villages. They must receive the necessary education and training, have the competence and seek to win the confidence of the people in order to be appointed or elected into any public office.

Mbororo Land Ownership

The Mbororo are determined to own land through the acquisition of land titles. Due to their increasing interests to settle permanently and become less nomadic; because of the rising value of land caused largely by population growth and because of the decline in their cattle and wealth, the Mbororo were forced to become involved in agriculture like the indigenous communities. They insisted on buying and owning large tracts of land, in spite of the growing population. The case of the indigenous and Mbororo populations of Menchum Division is very glaring. The Mbororo *Ardo* of Wum owned extensive lands and would not accept any arrangement to be resettled elsewhere or reduce the very large expanse of land under his control despite increasing population pressure and the consequent dwindling farming space.

Due to their wealth, some Mbororo got their way through with the help of poorer local chiefs and sometimes with the help of sympathetic administrators who most often favoured the rich Mbororo over the

⁴⁴INADES-Formation Cameroon, Mbororo: How Protected is the Minority Group? (Bamenda: INADES- Formation Quarterly No. 37 April-June, 2(01), p. 3.

poorer indigenous people⁴⁵. These situations largely contributed to the endemic and sometimes bloody farmer-grazer conflicts in Menchum Division and elsewhere in the North West Region.

Overt Confrontations

Although the Mbororo played the *Pulaaku* card and avoided confrontation and conflict with the local groups, “through politeness, modesty and reserve, violence as a means of conflict resolution is no new feature of Mbororo life.”⁴⁶ When conflicts arose, they were violent! The farmer-grazer conflict between the indigenous people and the Mbororo in Wum in 1981 claimed the lives of 9 people, shot and killed by the forces of law and order in an attempt to reduce tension. Ironically, none of those killed were Mbororo⁴⁷. In another instance, “during the state of emergency in October 1992, a number of Mbororo compounds were attacked and burnt, large numbers of cattle were claimed to have been attacked with machetes. The Mbororo retaliated on horsebacks, attacking local villagers with their herding staff.”⁴⁸

The determination of the indigenous population to control their land and the determination of the Mbororo to assert themselves over acquired land made peaceful internal cohesion between the two groups to be difficult and further complicating the quest for peaceful coexistence. This calls for a practical, acceptable and lasting solution not only to the endemic farmer-grazer problems throughout the North West Region, but to all boundary problems- real or imaginary - which hinder internal cohesion among diverse communities.

⁴⁵Dze-Ngwa, “National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon”, pp.237-241.

⁴⁶Davis, “Opening of Political Space in Cameroon,” p.222.

⁴⁷Interview with Pa Fineboy Tegha (Elder of the Aghem Traditional Council).On December 16, 2005, in Wum (Aged, 68).

⁴⁸Lucy Davis, “Opening of Political Space in Cameroon” in Review of African Political Economy, p.221.

The Search for Ethnic Citizenship

As far back as the early 1940s, the Mbororo started establishing permanent settlements in the North West Region of Cameroon. This was facilitated by the imposition of “grazing rules” which limited the mobility of the Mbororo pastoralists. These permanent settlements necessitated the request for ethnic citizenship not only in the region, but in the country as a whole. Such request for citizenship was initially not granted because the British colonial authorities “denied the Mbororo the status of a politically independent minority and classified them as ‘strangers’ rather than ‘natives’⁴⁹. However, the same British authorities later granted the entire Muslim community in the region some limited autonomy. By 1962, the Mbororo were given the legal entitlement to cultivate within the grazing area and each family had a limited farm size of 0.4 hectares, but, “as a legacy of the colonial period, the Mbororo lacked formal institutions of political representation, and largely relied on patron-client relationship in defending their economic and political interests”.⁵⁰

Over the years, the status of the Mbororo as strangers improved. It was only after the independence of Cameroon with Ahmadou Ahidjo as President that the Mbororo gained Cameroonian citizenship. This did not, however, mean automatic ethnic citizenship in the North West Region because they were still considered as Northerners with Fulbe nationality. As a result, the “Mbororo who were born and grew up in the Grassfields still counted as ‘strangers’ to the area, with limited rights to the regions natural and state resources”.⁵¹

With the opening of political space and with the liberty laws in the 1990s in Cameroon, political parties, pressure groups, regional and ethnic associations were established to deal with particular interests. It was under these circumstances that MBOSCUDA was formed to fight for the betterment of the Mbororo. MBOSCUDA has greatly contributed to redefine the political, economic and socio-cultural

⁴⁹Pelican, “Mbororo Citizenship Claims in Cameroon”, p. 544.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid. p.546.

position of the Mbororo in the North West Region. A case in point was the awareness created among the Mbororo in the region to establish new national identity cards indicating their actual birth place as their areas of origin rather than considering themselves as “Northerners”. This development qualified the Mbororo as “regional citizens with claims and rights to natural resources and political representation in their home areas”.⁵² Pelican submits that:

Despite their reputation as strangers and migrants, the Mbororo have been able to challenge local autochthony discourses. By claiming regional citizenship and minority status in the Cameroon state, they have attained the same legal entitlement to political representation and natural and government resources as their Grass field neighbours.⁵³

This new situation is being accepted by the Government and the UN, but how practical can “strangers” move from “Northerners” with Cameroonian citizenship to become North Westerners with “North-West citizenship?” It is clear that such claims are erroneous because it will only lead to future conflicts. While it is clear that the Mbororo share the rights to life, education, religion, movement, good health, economic growth, the age-old land rights could hardly be the same. One thing is clear: that the indigenous populations of the region “entertain strong political, economic and religious bonds with their settlement area based on citizenship in .a chiefdom, ancestral ties, and links with the land’s ritual topography. They ... consider themselves ‘native’ and ‘guardians of the land’⁵⁴. Consequently, these “natives” reject the Mbororo claim of regional citizenship in the North West Region with rights to natural and political resources. Such tensions will continue to fuel the endemic farmer grazer conflict in the region. How can peaceful co-existence be promoted among these peoples?

⁵²Ibid. p. 550.

⁵³Ibid.p.541.

⁵⁴Ibid.p.542

Bridging the Boundaries and the Quest for Peaceful Coexistence

Following the analyses of the boundaries between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples of the North West Region of Cameroon, it is evident that these entities were strange bedfellows in an endemic conflict situation. Although conflicts are unavoidable in human existence and interactions, especially within diverse cleavages, it is usually regrettable when such conflicts are allowed to degenerate into permanent division. Despite the endeavours to speed up effective cohesion within the country in general and in the North West Region in particular, there is still mutual suspicion and increasing misunderstandings in the attitudes of the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples of the Region. In order to bridge the boundaries and guarantee lasting peace and pre-empt any further overt classes and negative differences, both the positions of the Mbororo and the indigenous people over land ownership should be reviewed. The government of Cameroon and all stakeholders interested in peaceful coexistence among diverse peoples need to be more realistic and proactive to ensure peace and sustainable development in the North West Region in particular and in Cameroon in general. It is in this connection that we recommend the respect of the legacies of the “early” and “late settlers”, the adoption of well-defined geographical boundaries by the Mbororo; the promotion of permanent genuine dialogue and effective citizenship education and the promotion of unity in diversity. This will lead to a harmonious peaceful co-existence between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples of the North West Region of Cameroon.

The Respect of the legacies of the “Early” and “Late Settlers”

The respect of the legacies of the indigenous peoples and the Mbororo of the North West Region would certainly encourage peaceful coexistence among the respective communities in that part of the country. It should be recognized that the early settlers controlled the geographical space of the North West Region with defined boundaries among the various ethnic communities. The Mbororo on their part, hitherto to their recent claims of citizenship of the North

West Region, considered themselves as a stranger population who were different from the indigenous populations or early settlers. They humbly negotiated for and obtained grazing land from the traditional rulers of their host ethnic groups. The recent claim of ethnic citizenship with equal rights over land and property is very problematic and worsens the already persistent conflict in the area. This can instead fuel serious conflicts especially with the Mbororo cross border solidarity.

The two entities should coexist with their two major differences: while the Mbororo are essentially Muslims and cattle farmers, the indigenous people are not. But then some of the indigenous peoples are Muslims and cattle farmers as well. This, therefore, will no longer constitute a solid boundary between the two entities.

The Mbororo should adopt well-defined Geographical Boundaries

This also argue that instead of constituting MBOSCUA, without any autonomous administrative geographical space to defend the plight of the Mbororo in a region, already carved out into well-defined territorial limits is rather a gradual build-up for conflicts. Instead, the Mbororo communities should adopt well-defined geographical boundaries under which they can be identified. Wherever they are found, they should identify and collaborate with the indigenous people and actively take part in the political, economic and socio-cultural development of their adopted villages or ethnic groups. They should individually distinguish themselves within their communities without necessarily depending on the entire Mbororo lot for survival and should seek and obtain reasonable portions of land for farming without resorting to unscrupulous manipulations of the traditional rulers and administrative officials through unorthodox means for the acquisition of fake land titles. This will only lead to unnecessary crisis in the future.

We also suggest that, the indigenous peoples should consider the Mbororo and their descendants who have permanently settled for about a century and actively contributed to the development of their

Region not as indigenous peoples, but as “late settlers”. These late settlers should have defined and limited rights over farm land. These rights should be defined with the consent of the greatest majority of the indigenous peoples, the concerned Mbororo and the administration with keen consideration of population growth and limited farm land. However, those Mbororo who do not openly identify with the indigenous peoples and who are still migratory and are not decided on settlement should not be considered as indigenous. Due to quest for geopolitical space, it makes little sense for the Mbororo to claim indigenous citizenship without indigenous solidarity and permanent settlement. How can the Mbororo from Nkambe, Santa or Wum claim indigenous citizenship in these areas when they rather work closer and sympathize with the Mbororo from Ngaoundere and Banyo found in other regions? The idea here is that the North West Region of Cameroon has the indigenous peoples with well-defined geopolitical space and. the Mbororo are scattered all over the entire region without any defined autonomous polity. Evidently, any imposition of a collective Mbororo citizenship without a political space only put the indigenous peoples and the Mbororo at daggers drawn with warning signals of overt conflicts.

Permanent Genuine Dialogue and Education among the Diverse Peoples

The boundaries which exist between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples of the North West Region of Cameroon have orchestrated several conflicts, especially farmer-grazer conflicts. These conflicts, especially the cases in Menchum Division, have contributed to further migration of some Mbororo to safer areas. The consequence was that it led to a drop in the supply of meat in the Wum market. For some time, the Mbororo preferred to take their cattle to other markets than to the Wum cattle market⁵⁵. This situation later improved but mutual suspicion between the indigenous Aghem (Wum) people and

⁵⁵56 Informal discussion with Oumarou Haruna in Wum, March 18.2011. Teacher aged about 45.

the Aghem Mbororo persisted, albeit government resolves to check the conflicts. Despite this situation, we submit that “there is practical human problem that cannot be resolved peacefully through dialogue.”⁵⁶

Genuine dialogue based on fundamental equality among the existing cleavages in the region should be considered. Such dialogue should be free from emotions and obsessions, especially if the outcome of such dialogue took into consideration the general will, first, of the indigenous peoples, then the Mbororo, the government and other stakeholders interested in minority issues. Such dialogue should be organized by trustworthy and respected personalities from different religious, political, economic and social backgrounds. The Central Government should implement the decisions arrived at without bias. Corrupt government officials and traditional authorities involved in shady land deals should be held responsible for overt conflicts and sanctioned accordingly. Any attempt, therefore, to stifle dialogue for whatever reason would be dangerous to Cameroon in general and to the North West Region in particular. In this genuine dialogue, continuous education on effective citizenship and peace-building should be carried out by all stakeholders concerned with peaceful coexistence.

Unity in Diversity

Unity in diversity should reduce the boundaries which exist between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples. This means that the various cleavages in the region should be recognized, accepted and protected within the diverse society by ensuring mutual respect and peaceful co-existence and, in fact, promoting the traditions and customs of the diverse cleavages. The largely Muslim Mbororo with their Pulaaku code can hardly be integrated with Christianity and the African traditional religions largely practiced by the indigenous peoples of the region. The essence of integration is homogeneity. “Considering integration to mean the bringing together of different groups of people

⁵⁶57 Dze-ngwa, Peace and Citizenship Education: Towards Internal Cohesion in Cameroon. Bamako: ERNW ACA Publication. 2008. pp. 38-40.

into an unrestricted and equal society, it becomes understandable that different groups allow for heterogeneity and cannot therefore be homogeneous... It is therefore, illusory to consider this concept in a multicultural and multi-ethnic country like Cameroon”⁵⁷. No matter what form integration takes, different groups will always come up with new arguments to manifest inter-group differences. Integrated groups would hardly become homogeneous or exactly the same. They would certainly retain some original differences, which make pure integration very difficult, hence, the concept of Unity in diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contends that political, economic and socio-cultural boundaries exist between the Mbororo and the indigenous peoples of the North West Region of Cameroon, some real and others imaginary. This, no doubt, caused the protracted farmer-grazer problem in the region and the claim by the Mbororo for indigenous citizenship in the region through recognition and constitutional protection. These are legitimate human rights issues, especial when it comes to their right to life, education, health and ownership of property. However, the search for geopolitical space should be dependent on their numerical strengths within any give community. Unfortunately, the Mbororo are still scattered all over the national territory, with no geographical space to call theirs. Worse still, the Mbororo still consider themselves different from the indigenous peoples while the indigenous people continue to consider the Mbororo as strangers. This situation will continue to adversely affect relations between these groups of people and will continue to shake the very foundation of peaceful coexistence in the Region and threaten the country’s unity. An escalation of a conflict situation between the two communities will attract Mbororos from elsewhere due to their cross-regional and religious solidarity. This must be pre-empted to avoid another crisis in the already endemic conflict situation in Sub Saharan Africa.

⁵⁷Dze-Ngwa, “National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon”, p.266

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Rituals in Traditional Boundary Settlements In the Cameroon Grassfields

By

E.S.D. Fomin and V.S.Ngitir

Abstract

Traditional African states and nations were well demarcated within recognizable territories. Though the concept of boundary did not hinder interactions and cooperation among states, boundaries, were considered inviolable in many parts of Africa. To guarantee the inviolability of boundaries many forms of rituals were employed in demarcating them. In the Cameroon Grassfields for example, state boundaries were often determined and sanctioned by rituals. Monarchs used ritual landmarks, buried ritual stuffs or planted ritual plants to demarcate reference spots along their borders. In some extreme cases discussed in this chapter, human beings were often buried alive to eternalize boundaries. This chapter shows how the study ritual boundaries in the Cameroon Grassfields can lead to a better understanding of the geopolitical history of Africa especially that of Cameroon. The chapter also demonstrates the fact that the nature, contents and complexities of rituals often reflected the value attached to each border pact in the area.

Key Words: Boundary, Cameroon Grassfields, Inviolability, Monarchs, Rituals

Résumé

Les Etats et les nations traditionnels d'Afrique étaient bien délimités en territoire reconnaissables. Bien que le concept de frontière n'entravait

pas les interactions et la coopération parmi les Etats, les frontières étaient considérées inviolables dans plusieurs parties du continent et, pour garantir l'inviolabilité des frontières, plusieurs formes de rituels étaient utilisées pour les délimiter. Dans les Grassfields du Cameroun par exemple, les limites entre les Etats étaient souvent déterminées et éprouvée par les rituels. Les monarques utilisaient les points de repère rituels, enterraient les effets rituels ou plantaient des plantes rituelles pour délimiter les points de repère le long de leurs frontières. Dans certains cas extrêmes examine dans ce chapitre, ils enterraient souvent les êtres humains vivants pour rendre les limite éternelles. Ce chapitre démontre comment l'étude des limites rituelles dans les Grassfields d Cameroun peut aboutir à une meilleure compréhension de l'histoire géopolitique de l'Afrique et particulièrement celle du Cameroun. De la même manière, le chapitre démontre le fait que la nature, les contenus et les complexités des rituels reflètent souvent la valeur liée à chaque pacte de frontière dans la zone.

Mots clés: Frontière, Grassfields du Cameroun, inviolabilité, Monarques, Rituels.

Introduction

The Cameroon Grassfields coincide approximately with the western quadrant of the Republic of Cameroon. It covers the entire west region, most of the northwest and fringes of the neighbouring regions especially southwest and centre regions (see map, p5). Though this region is uniform in many of its geographical aspects, it is historically quite varied. It was a wonderful pull destination for many migrating peoples. Today, we can identify the Tikar, Bamileke, Bali-Chamba and Widikum as the dominant ethnic entities in this sub-region of Cameroon. Most of them were great state builders. In this area, like in many other parts of Africa, rituals were important accompaniments of the geopolitical diplomacy⁵⁸ of many traditional

⁵⁸Paul Nchoji Nkwi, "Traditional Diplomacy, Trade and Warfare in the Nineteenth Century Western Grassfields" in Chem-Langhee and V.G. Fanson, Nso' and their

states. Rituals also played and have continued to play a big role in the social and economic life of people of this sub-region.

Nol Alembong (2010); Daryll Forde 1979; Joseph P. Ekarika and Rosemary N. Edet (eds) (1984); Victor Turner (1997) and other authors have defined rituals variously. According to Ekarika and Edet, “a ritual is a means of communicating something of religious significance through word, symbol and action...”⁵⁹. Rituals also help to show the relationship of religion to the structure of the society, thus they provide continuity and unity among those who perform or attend them. The two editors put rituals into two categories which include Personal and communal. The latter category of rituals is relevant to our study because boundary rituals affect the parties and their communities collectively. For example rain making, agriculture rites, boundary pacts and communion sacrifices are all commonly employed communal rituals in parts of Africa.

“The ritual symbols unite and cover beneath an external presentation many ideals and images which elude logical analysis, for they refer to the sacred”⁶⁰. Writing on Cameroon’s Western Grassland Incantations, Nol Alembong, upholds Victor Turner’s definition of ritual as proscribed formal behaviour for occasions, not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powers”⁶¹ African shrines as cultural signposts which demarcate ethnic, territorial and social boundaries”⁶² continue to impact on the relations among polities in Cameroon Grassfields. Elsewhere in Africa the concept of rituals boundaries has used to plan development. “By simultaneously invoking ritual powers for biodiversity preservation and

Neighbors: Readings in Social History, (Amherst, Massachusetts: Amherst College, 1996)

⁵⁹Joseph P. Ekarika and Rosemary N. Edet, *From Nature to Divine: Introduction to the Study of Religions*(Rome:J.Ekarika, 1984) passim

⁶⁰Ibid

⁶¹Nol Alembong, *Cameroon’s Western Grassland Incantations: Background, Society, and Cosmology* (Gottingen: Cuivlller Verlag,2010) p50

⁶²Allan Charles (ed.) *Shrines in Africa: History, Politics and Society* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2009) passim

making political use of ritual boundaries without physically demarcating them, I actors seek to reconcile cosmological and geographical notions of boundaries”⁶³.

The concept and practice of creating and sanctioning traditional state boundaries by among the polities of the Cameroon Grassfields appeared to have been very strong and fashionable. The traditional states in the region were created at different times by the various creators.⁶⁴ Once a new state was created, its creators sought to obtain recognitions from neighbours and the surest way to do so was to have its boundaries recognized. And for such recognition to be valid and lasting ritual land marks were usually established between such states. Many parts of the Cameroon Grassfields had well established states with their boundaries well demarcated and balance of power among them accepted by most of them by of the 19th century. Ritual pacts guaranteed the permanence of state boundaries even more than what written and signed treaties did in Europe around the same period. This is because the parties in former were bound by both temporal and spiritual Obligations to uphold ritual pacts.

Traditional Cameroon Grassfields boundaries delimited territories not movements, interactions and the ownership of property. In many parts of the Grassfields, the right of an individual, to own property across state boundaries, was recognized though not always sanctioned by rituals. Thus the people of Bali-Nyonga owned a sacred river ritual site deep in Bawock land, the fons of Nso offered periodic sacrifices in Lake Ber in Nkar on the boundary with Bamum, the Mankon fons also performed ritual sacrifices at Bamukumbit heritage sites⁶⁵ without any

⁶³Hagberg Sten, “The Transformation of Ritual boundaries in Resource Use Practices in Burkina Faso “Africa Today, Vol.52, Number 4 Summer2006pp109-129,Indiana University Press

⁶⁴E.S.D. Fornin, A Hand Book on Esoh-Attah Chiefdom (Bamenda: Patron Publishing House, 1994)pp 8-22; B. Chem-langhee and V.G. Fanson, Nso and their Neighbors, 1996)p XIV

⁶⁵Interview with Ganyonga III,(reigning fon of Bali-Nyonga) April 2010; F.A.Ndenge, “Origin and Migration of the Mankon People” In Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru II, Mankon Cultural Festival(Yaounde: SOPECAM 1985) passim

problem. .

However, states like Kom, Nso, Bali-Nyonga and Bali-Kumbat all in western Grassfields also called the Bamenda Grassfields, appeared not to have been very interested in ritually sanctioned boundaries with their neighbours. In fact, they had not totally accepted the sub regional balance of power which emanated from such state boundaries before the intervention of the European colonialists in the region at the close of the 19th century. Proof of this is the near absence of boundaries that were sanctioned by rituals between them and their neighbours. They seemed to have entered more into trade and other alliances than ritual boundary pacts. As a rule, States which were not keen in demarcating their boundaries by ritual signposts had expansionist ambition and would seize the least opportunity to acquire new territories at the expense of their neighbours, as we shall see in the examples studied in this chapter. The absence or presence of ritual boundaries, their contents and magnitude have useful clues for the interpretation and reinterpretation of the history of state creation and nation building in the Cameroon Grassfields.

The Cameroon Grassfields

It is important to situate the Cameroon Grass field which is the study locale of this chapter. Briefly speaking, it is a geographical as well as a cultural entity, which occupies the western quadrant of Cameroon (see map below). It is a woodland type Savannah which has been greatly degraded in most parts today because of pressure from its teaming population. Topographically, it covers the plateau of the Bamboutous Mountain range and its climate has hardly had extremes. The soils are rich and good for farming and grazing. The various peoples who inhabit the sub-region are enterprising in both economic and state building cultures.⁶⁶

As a cultural unit, the Cameroon Grass field is a melting pot of

⁶⁶Jean Pierre Warnier, "The History of the Peopling of Western Cameroon and the Genesis of its Landscapes" in B. Chem-Langhee and V.G. Fanso, Nso' and Its Neighbours, pp2-18

different cultures. The peoples of this sub-region, many of them Bantu related, have through many hundred years of interaction and admixture, produced what can be called today, the Cameroon Grassfields culture. This is easily noticeable in dressing, eating habit, political organization and economic preoccupations which we do not have space to go into here. Suffice to state that the centralized political culture of this area is characterized by glorious kingship, ever growing quest for titles and ranks in political organization.⁶⁷ Equally polygyny in marriage life and the interactions with the ancestral spirits and the supreme divine being in religious matters pervade their cultural life. Among these peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields is the phenomenon of ritual boundary demarcations deeply ingrained in their culture. Some examples of the different types of ritual boundary pacts are examined in the remaining pages of this chapter.

The Ahreankeng Ritual Boundary Pact

The Ahreankeng ritual Pact marked the Boundary between, Essoh-Attah (Foreke-Chacha) and Lebang (Fontem⁶⁸) both kingdoms are in the Cameroon Eastern Grassfields⁶⁹. They are prominent among the nine paramount states that make up the Nweh (Bangwa) section of Lebialem division in the Southwest region of Cameroon. Though in the Southwest region, most of Lebialem belongs culturally and

⁶⁷E.S.D.Fomin, *A Comparative Study of Societal Influences on Indigenous Slavery in Two Types of Societies in Africa* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 2002) p2, 15, 45

⁶⁸The appellations in brackets are the colonial ones while the others are ones used by the people of the area.

⁶⁹The information on this ritual boundary pact was collected from oral interviews which I conducted in Essoh-Attah and Lebang in 1981. Prominent among the people interviewed was Tleh Bezanchong, the court historian of Essoh-Attah at the time. The field work during which I conducted the interview also took me to the ritual spot.

geographically to the Cameroon Grassfields⁷⁰. In fact, what is Lebialem today was part of the Dschang Region during the German colonial administration and was separated from it only in 1920 in the boundary adjustment between the British and French League of Nations' mandated territories of the former German Cameroon.⁷¹ As we shall see later in this chapter, the Anglo-French boundary in Cameroon is the same one which separates Essoh-Attah and Lebang from neighbouring Bamileke polities which also concluded other well-known ritual boundary pacts with them.

Abreankeng is, however, one of the most outstanding and best remembered ritual boundary spot in the sub-region. This is certainly because it involved the burying of a human being alive on the spot. It took place around mid-19th century and the authors were Fualeke (Foreke) Tanjoanji of Essoh-Attah and Fuatem (Fontem) Asonganyi of Lebang. Tanjoanji ruled his state ca.1860-1910 as the 8th ruler of Essoh-Attah and as the 3rd after his great grandfather Njingu split his kingdom into 4 states of Essoh-Attah, Lebiah, Njoagwi and Bellah around 1780.⁷²

Asonganyi on the other hand was the successor of Ajongakoh I, often called '*achemaboti* (half hand)'⁷³. He was half-handed as a result of injuries he suffered in his expansionist wars against the Mbo people. It is believed that Lebang was constituted as a heterogeneous state only during the reign of Ajongakoh I, and his successor, Asonganyi. *Abreankeng* is the most memorable ritual boundary pact which Asonganyi concluded with a Nweh neighbour. He also concluded a ritual pact with the Mbo people outside Nweh country which is discussed later in this chapter.⁷⁴

⁷⁰Robert Brain, "Bangwa (Western Bamileke Marriage Wards)" in *Africa* XXXIX, 1 January 1969, pp 11-23; Paul N. Nkwi *Traditional Diplomacy, Trade and Warfare* -»" p19

⁷¹V.G. Fanso

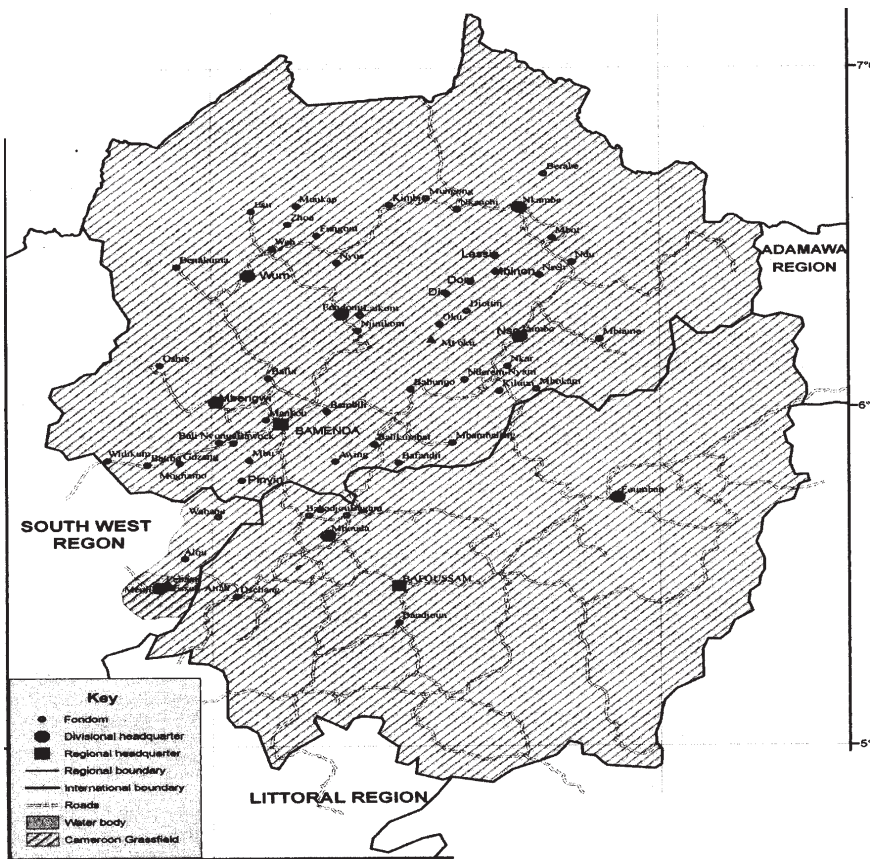
⁷²E.S.D. Fomin, *A Hand Book on Essoh-Attah Chiefdom*, p. 23

⁷³George Atem, *The Fontem Kingdom: A brief History and Tradition of Lebang people*, (Buea, Self, 2000) p.72

⁷⁴*Ibid.* p.9

The making of *Abreankeng* pact was a solemn ritual occasion. There were two parties comprising chiefs, notable, medicine men and palace retainers all from each of the polities (Essoh-Attah and Lebang) by their paramount rulers. *Abreankeng* spot is roughly midway between Atengattah and Azi palaces of Essoh-Attah and Lebang respectively, on the direct road which links the two Palaces which are about ten kilometres apart. The spot is identifiable even today by the ritual plants which were planted there over a hundred years ago.

Map of the Cameroon Grassfields



The burying of some Nweh royal paraphernalia and concoctions from medicinal plants were the obvious things that those present

expected to see. It seemed only the leaders knew in strict confidence that they would bury some slaves alive to make the boundary in a lasting and inviolable manner.⁷⁵ But Asonganyi in the end provided only a gun and some other royal stuff.⁷⁶ Even among the Essoh-Attah delegation, no person knew they would bury someone except Tanjoanji, the king. This explains why the ill-fated Mbongakessoh would not suspect when Tanjoanji his lord asked him to enter and measure himself in the hole which was being dug for the ritual stuffs. The last time that he went into it and Tanjoanji discovered that the rest of the ritual stuff could enter with him, he ordered that Mbongakessoh be buried with them. The order was obeyed immediately and to the letter. The man and the things were quickly and solemnly buried. The parties parted quietly but it was understood that *Ahreankeng* had become the eternal boundary between Essoh-Attah and Lebang.

It remained inviolable from around 1870 to 1933 when Lebang people expanded beyond the border limits which Ahreankeng imposed. This gave rise to hostility between the people of the two states and British colonial administration in Mamfe division was quick to intervene. But the two paramount rulers at the time Asonganyi and Asongtia I for Lebang and Essoh-Attah respectively informed the divisional Officer in a note written for them by the Native Authority's court clerk, Joseph F. Forchap on 20th June 1933 that they would prefer to settle the matter themselves.⁷⁷ In the violation of the pact had in the first place been caused by the new clan boundaries which the colonialists created in Cameroon.

They appeared to have recognized that the clan boundary maps which Cadman and Greg as British colonial divisional officers drew in 1922 and 1926⁷⁸ respectively created the confusion and, consequent,

⁷⁵Ibid

⁷⁶George Atem claims in his book, *The Fontem Kingdom*, p 9 that Lebang did not provide anything for the ritual. Off course it cannot be true that the Lebang party led by Fontem himself came only to watch Essoh-Attah demarcated singlehandedly by ritual the boundary between the two chiefdoms.

⁷⁷E.S.D. Fomin, *A Hand Book on Essoh-Attah Chiefdom*, p. 18

⁷⁸Ibid

violations of ritual boundaries in the division. Thus, they went into other boundary pacts in order to prevent hostility between them. The violations of Ahreankeng pact notwithstanding, it has greatly influenced the geopolitical history of the two states. Mbongakessoh is said to have pronounced a curse on his murderers which has been taken to be responsible for some of the development problems in the area. In fact, the people of Essoh-Attah have done much to atone for this crime of burying him alive, including offering masses of atonement in the Catholic Church tradition for the purpose.

The awe of burying a man alive, a gun and other ritual stuffs nevertheless has had some deep positive effects on the relations between the two states. When the German colonialist invaded Lebang in 1890, it was in Essoh-Attah that Asonganyi took refuge and Essoh-Attah was attacked and sacked alongside Lebang. German colonialists exiled Asonganyi and Tanjoanji to Garoua and Tinto respectively at the end of the war. In fact, thanks to the *Abreankeng* pact the two rulers became great allies and their states have remained close in the sub-regional politics. The people of both kingdoms show great respect to this ritual spot that is fast becoming a pilgrimage spot especially for Essoh-Attah people.

Ritual Pacts Involving Essoh-Attah, Lebang and other Polities

After the *Abreankeng* historic pact, Essoh-Attah and Lebang also went into other pacts in the northeast and southwest portions of their territories to demarcate their boundary at Biabia and Mbing Mak respectively. These other ritual pacts took place during the colonial period because of the confusion mentioned above. The Biabia ritual spot is called *Njoaboh*, where the north-eastern boundary of Essoh-Attah with Lebang, Ndungalah (Ngunera) and other polities in Menoua division of the western region of Cameroon was demarcated. The ritual involved the offering and taking of an oath over a type of concoction containing meat, egusi and other foods (eboh) usually

offered to appease Bamileke gods and ancestors⁷⁹. What remains today to remind us of the Njoaboh pact, are stones on which the paramount rulers sat to take the oath to keep the boundary inviolable. Our informant⁸⁰ claimed that the pact was concluded around the early 1920s and was overseen by Kima of Bakebe and other non-stakeholders as agents of British colonial administration.

The Mbing Mak boundary ritual between Essoh-Attah and Lebang, Essoh-Attah and Njoagwi and other neighbouring polities of the sub-region was established at Betahasamble⁸¹. I did not seem to have involved the burying of ritual stuffs. Two reasons have been responsible for the absence of ritual stuffs. The German colonialists are purported to have set the boundary and, therefore, would not employ ritual to sanction it. It was simply inserted in their clan map of the region. The parties involved considered the road junction which marked that boundary as a ritual signpost. Indeed, *Betahasambia* means literally the junction of seven roads. And a road junction in Nweh tradition is a ritual spot where ritual sacrifices were usually performed. Nweh people in the past who could not trace their ancestral skulls offered sacrifices to such ancestors at major road junctions⁸². A junction of seven roads going to Essoh-Attah, Lebang, Njoagwi, Mbo and Banyang countries was sacred enough to be a major boundary ritual spot.

But before the Germans' arrival in the area, Fuatem Asonganyi of Lebang had concluded another ritual boundary pact with some Mbo chiefs whom he defeated in his expansionist wars. The pact involved the planting of a fig tree (*ndah*) at Elumba market square deep inside Mbo country around the 1870s. It is believed that it was as a result of the pact that he secured control over some Mbo territories and secured annual tribute payments to him of palm oil and smoked fish from some subjugated Mbo chieftains who were only liberated after, the Germans

⁷⁹Interview with Forcheh Fualefeh, Nchu, March 21, 1981. He was 70 years old when interviewed.

⁸⁰Ibid

⁸¹Ibid

⁸²Interview with Teih Bezanchong, Essoh-Attah, March 19, 1981

defeated Asonqanyi⁸³. As a matter of fact ritual boundary making took place in this area before, during and after the European colonization.

Ritual Boundary Pacts in the Cameroon Western Grassfields

Polities in the Cameroon Western Grassfields, also often called the Bamenda Grassfields, were equally involved in ritual boundary making but many expansionist big states were often not very keen in involving their states in ritual boundary pacts which limited them eternally from expanding their territories. Nonetheless, the peer polity concept, whereby polities got peer recognition on the basis of their independence and the control they exercised over given territories, remained the corner stone of geopolitical diplomacy in the sub-region. The concept helped the many small and some medium size states to maintain a reasonable balance of power characterized by a network of diplomatic relations and economic exchanges⁸⁴. Indeed, ritual boundary demarcations remained the surest proof of serious commitment among (Cameroon Grassfields states to uphold accepted state boundaries. In addition to demarcating boundaries, ritual pacts also helped to affirm good relations among states in the Bamenda Grassfields.⁸⁵

Nkwen is known to have concluded ritual pacts with her neighbours by burying two dogs and planting two fig trees on their graves despite the trenches it had dug around its settlements and the non-ritual alliances it had secured from other states in the Sub-region. In this way, Nkwen secured lasting peace and agreement with Mankon “to mutually defend and protect each ‘other’s trade and traders”⁸⁶. Small and weaker states like Nkwen in the Cameroon⁸⁷ Bamenda Grassfields were very keen in alliances with their peers which protected them

⁸³George Atem, *The Fontem Kingdom* p.10

⁸⁴Paul Nchoji Nkwi, “Traditional Diplomacy, Trade and Warfare in the Nineteen Century Western Grassfields”p19

⁸⁵Ibid

⁸⁶Ibid,p22

⁸⁷Ibid,p23

mutually against would be aggressors and annexationists. All serious diplomatic alliances including boundary and trade treaties were sanctioned by ritual performances which involved blood. It was either the blood of a slave, dog, goat or sheep that gave an alliance or treaty the sacredness it needed to remain inviolable.

Though small size states were usually more anxious to secure ritual alliances, such alliances had become very fashionable in the area before the arrival of the European colonialists at the close of the century. Thus, ritual alliances like the ones between Bali-Kumbat 'and Bamum; Bali-Kumbat and Bafut; Nso and Baba; Nso and Bum; Nso and Ntem; Mankon and "Nkwen, Bali-Nyonga and Nkwen; Bali-Nyonga and Bamesseng; Kom and Ajung, some of which concerned boundary issues, were in existence by the end of the nineteenth century. The hostility between Nso and Bamum which resulted in the Nsa'ngu's head affairs appeared to have been brought about by the fact that no known ritual boundary pact existed between the two brother states⁸⁸ and as a result, border conflicts between them seemed to have been frequent.

Fanso sees the significant of European colonialists signing treaties of annexation with the traditional rulers⁸⁹ of Cameroon in the light of the fact that they were quite familiar with pacts in their traditional diplomacy. The problem which arose between many of them and the, colonialists was the interpretation of the treaties by the latter to mean that the former had by," signing the treaties lost sovereignty over their territories which they secured many years ago by inviolable ritual pacts. The traditional rulers in the Western Cameroon Grassfields had, used pacts to regulate boundaries, trade and other diplomatic matters with their neighbours in the Sub-region before it came under colonial rule and were unsuspecting when they were invited to enter into treaties with the Europeans.

The numerous ethnic conflicts in the Cameroon western Grassfields are the result new clan boundaries which the colonialists

⁸⁸Ibid,p27

⁸⁹V.G. Fanso, "Background to the Annexation of Cameroon 1875-1885" ABIA; Cameroon Cultural Review, Nos.29-30, 1975, pp231-280

imposed on the people of the sub-region for purpose of reducing administrative cost. Clan boundaries often ignored the ritually established ones. For example, the British colonialists fused states to create the so called native authority thus, subordinating many hitherto independent states with recognized ritual borders under others, in so doing desecrating the boundaries and destabilizing the balance of power in the area. For a better understanding of the geopolitical history of the sub-region, we are going to examine a few examples with emphasis on expansionist states which were not very keen establishing ritual boundaries with their neighbours but also some examples of states which were interested in maintaining sacred and permanent borders in the area.

Expansionist States and Ritual Pacts

Bali-Nyonga is a good example of the expansionist states in the Bamenda Grassfields in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Bali-Nyonga state builders were late comers in Bamenda Grassfields. They came to the area around mid-nineteenth century when most states were in existence and the balance of power among them well established. They had to create the Bali-Nyonga states (empire) by robbing existing states in the area of territories, especially the Widikum villages. And they had thus become one of the principal states in the Bamenda Grassfields by the time the German colonialists arrived the area at the close of that century. The Bali-Nyonga and the other Chamba state builders were often in conflict with the Tikar and Widikum over territorial claims. In fact, the second half of the century witnessed many pact alliances and counter alliances among the states of the sub-region⁹⁰. The fear of the expansionist policy of Bali-Nyonga and other Chamba groups drove small and weaker states to seek greater cooperation with other states in the form of pacts usually sanctioned by rituals.

The new adventurous state builders also destabilized the old

⁹⁰Paul N. Nkwi "Traditional Diplomacy, Trade and Warfare in the Nineteen Century Western Grassfields" p23

balance of power in the sub-region. They did not usually go in for boundary pacts which could limit the expansion of their states. The pacts which Bali-Nyong concluded with Bamesseng and Nkwen⁹¹ during this period, for example, appeared to have been trade alliances not boundary pacts. Bali-Nyonga also took advantage of her might, exhibited by mounted horses to intimidate the states of the sub-region⁹². The immediate neighbours watched her closely and some even settled their previous differences and entered into ritual pacts as way to checkmate the Bali-Nyonga expansionist ambition. For example, the Mankon-Nkwen boundary pact was concluded to minimize the risk on both parties from the ever expanding Bali-Nyonga⁹³. It would appear Bali-Nyonga immediately went into military pacts with Nkwen (Bafreng) and Mendankwe to reduce the risk of the Mankon-Nkwen pact.

The Mankon-Nkwen pact was concluded around the 1880s by burying two dogs and planting fig trees on the spots which henceforth gave the orientation to the Nkwen-Mankon boundary. It was around the same period that Nkwen and Bali-Nyonga also concluded a ritual military pact. In addition to the ritual spot, the boundary between Mankon and Nkwen was physically demarcated by the stream which takes its rise from the Mendankwe hills south-westwards into the Mezam River. Mankon and Nkwen were small chiefdoms by the rating of states in the Bamenda Grassfields in the nineteenth century⁹⁴ but withstood the aggression of powerful expansionist states through ritual pacts of mutual protection among themselves. They also established friendship with non-neighbours. In this way they stemmed the Bali-Nyonga expansionist aggression for quite a while before the Germans open a new chapter of Boundary relations in the Bamenda

⁹¹Ibid

⁹²Vincent Titanji, Mathew Gwanfogbe, Elias Nwana, Gwanua Ndamang, Adolf Lima Serna, *An Introduction of Bali-Nyonga: A Tribute to his royal Highness Galega II, Traditional Ruler of Bali-Nyonga from 1940-1985* (Yaoundé: Stardust Printer, 1988) p14.

⁹³Ibid

⁹⁴Ibid

Grassfields⁹⁵.

Another expansionist state in the Sub-region which used ritual pacts more to subjugate and absorb neighbours was Kom. The Kom state builders seemed to have suffered great vicissitudes in their migration and attempt to create a strong state in the Cameroon Western Grassfields. The history of the Kom state and the life of the people are dominated by ritual performances. Yet the Kom state builders avoided eternal ritual boundary pacts. For example, Kom-Ajung, Kom-Akei and Kom-Achain pacts which were concluded in the second half of the nineteenth century, were renewable every time that a new *ton* was enthroned. But since the Foyin Ndi (1926-1954), they have never been renewed. The name Kom became instead a common appellation for autonomous chiefdoms of Achain, Akeh, Ajung, Mbenka, Mbessinaku, Mbueni, Baicham, and Menjang which Kom conquered, most of them during the reign of Foyin Yuh (1865-1912)⁹⁶. Some scholars believed that the Afo-a-kom, sacred carving was supposed to bind all Kom people together both indigenous Kom, the conquered and annexed people.⁹⁷ During Yuh's reign, he carved the Afo-a-kom stature which he purportedly bestowed with sacred powers and made both the conquered people and indigenous Kom look upon it as the soul of the Kom state and therefore a binding force⁹⁸.

The Bali-Kumbat, like the Bali-Nyonga, both of the Chamba migrants group, was expansionist and as a result forced many small states in the Western Grassfields to enter into ritual boundary pacts and alliances. The first victim of the Bali-Kumbat aggressive expansion in this region was Akum. Akum is one of the many small Widikum chiefdoms which also entered into the Cameroon Grassfields much earlier than the Chamba to which Bali-Nyonga, Bali-Kumbat and other

⁹⁵ Ibid pp, 28-29

⁹⁶ Jude M. Ngam, Kom Fons under Colonial Rule 1904-1946, (Dissertation for DIPES II ENS 2009/2010 Academic Year) p24.

⁹⁷Walter Nkwi, "From Village to National and Global Art: Whose Art" in E.S.D. Fomin and John W. Forje (eds.) Central African Crises, Reform and Reconstruction (Dakar:CODESRIA,2005) pp132-154

⁹⁸ Ibid

Bali groups belong. Bali-Kumbat raided Akum fiercely and went ahead to raid Bambui, Bambili, Bali-Kontan and Bamukumbit. Bamukumbit was displaced from the on which Bali-Kumbat occupies today⁹⁹. Though many of these succumbed easily to them, AWing appeared to have successfully resisted the raids to the extent that Bali-Kumbat was forced to enter into a ritual boundary pact with her probably to prevent other states from allying with Awing against Bali-Kumbat.

The ritual performance involved the Awing-Bali-Kumbat Boundary pact included the *afon fondoms* sitting back to back on a ridge each one facing his fondom. On that spot, they are purported to have buried some ritual stuffs which included a slave¹⁰⁰. In that position, they are said to have taken an oath never to violate each other's boundary which has never been despite the changes the colonialists made in clan boundaries in the area.¹⁰¹ It is in this wise that one can see how effective ritual pacts have been in boundary settlements in this area of Cameroon. Even the expansionist states were sometimes forced by circumstances in some cases to conclude inviolable pacts with some neighbours.

Conclusion

This chapter shows clearly that ritual boundary pacts can be profitably exploited interpret and reinterpret the history of state formation and nation building in the Cameroon Grassfields. This comes out vividly in the concepts developed in the chapter and the factual historical examples which have been employed to illustrate them. What this chapter demonstrates in the main conceptually is that the highly religious minded people of this sub region put religion at the centre of all serious state and personal issues. "Like all Africans, the

⁹⁹Felis Ngong Pong Alota, "Land conflicts between Awing and her Neighbors, 1925-2006, Maitrise Dissertation, of history, University of Yaoundé 1, 2008,p48

¹⁰⁰Interview with the Fon of Awing. The interview was conducted by Atch, a PhD student in the Department of History University of Yaoundé 1, at Awing palace, July 12, 2010

¹⁰¹Felis Ngong Pong Alota, "Land conflicts between Awing and her Neighbors-" p48

people of the Western Grasslands of Cameroon are naturally and profoundly religious”¹⁰². The use of rituals in boundary making was, therefore, to put religion at the centre of state diploma and the geopolitics in this area where the pull and push forces of migration were bringing peoples of close cultures, especially religious culture in quick successions into the sub-region. The religious belief of most peoples in the sub-region makes it difficult for traditional rulers to violate ritual boundary oaths which they took no matter the circumstance.

States were, therefore, not often prepared to conclude ritual pacts which they would not keep. From the examples discussed in the chapter, it is possible to see and interpret the geopolitical history of states in the region before the European Colonial interference. States which did not have ritual boundary pacts were aggressive and expansionist in their diplomacy in the same way, those which wanted to consolidate their territorial gains were anxious to conclude ritual pacts. The European colonialists, Germans, British and the French alike interrupted this traditional diplomacy of ritual boundary pacts in the Cameroon Grassfields thus, sowing the seed of messy boundary conflicts which are rampant in the area even today. The expansionist states which had not signed ritual boundary pacts were eventually going to do so after the balance of power in the sub-region had been established because they needed ritual pacts to ensure the sanctity of their own boundaries.

The violation of ritual boundary pacts was real before European encroachment in the state formation process in the area. Rituals sanctioned boundary pacts religiously and only few intrepid rulers would violate them without being afraid of serious repercussions to themselves and their states. States which were not physically well demarcated by rivers and mountain ranges were usually more inclined to secure their boundaries with ritual pacts. Major boundary ritual pacts which involved human blood have remained memorable events in the history of the sub-region and are very useful clues today in the interpretation of the history of state relations in the area. It would seem, however, that the practice of ritual boundary pacts was first

¹⁰²Nol Alembong, Cameroon's Western Grasslands Incantations, p10

fashionable only among the Tikar and Bamileke occupants of the Cameroon Grassfields. The expansionist Chamba late comers to the area were often reluctant to conclude ritual boundary pacts with neighbours.

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Colonial Boundaries and Disintegration: A Study of the Boki 'Nation' Of the Cross River Region of Cameroon and Nigeria

By

Henry Kam Kah and Walter Gam Nkwi

Abstract

This chapter examines the contribution of the German and British colonial rules in the Cross River Region of Cameroon and Nigeria to the division and the disintegration of the Bo 'nation.' The scramble for Africa in the last quarter of the 19th century led to the partition of the continent by European powers into spheres of influence. The Boki were, unfortunately, divide up because, while a greater part of the people fell under British administration of Nigeria, minority came under German administration of Cameroon. The German and British determination to control the hinterland regions led to war, deposition of the chief and great division of the Boki people.

Résumé

Cet article examine la contribution du système d'administration allemand et britannique dans la région du Cross River entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria, à la division et à la désintégration du territoire des Boki. La ruée vers l'Afrique dans le dernier quart du 19^e siècle a mené à la partition du continent par les puissances européennes en sphères d'influence. Les Boki ont été divisés malheureusement parce que pendant qu'une plus grande partie de la population tombait sous administration britannique au Nigeria, une minorité est restée sous administration allemande au Cameroun. La détermination allemande et britannique de contrôler les régions de l'arrière-pays aura donc mené à

la guerre, à la destitution du chef et à la division du peuple Boki.

Introduction

The colonial encounter in Africa has been a subject of debate among scholars for a long period of time. While some glorify white domination in Africa, others blame it for the problems of Africa today, Gann and Duignan, argue that colonial rule in Africa was more constructive than destructive and was a burden on Europe. They further argue that European penetration of Africa did not lead to social degradation and did not take away any form of wealth that the continent had previously enjoyed. Instead, roads, ports and hydro-electric plants were constructed so that resources of Africa could be extracted to improve both Europe and Africa.¹⁰³

On the other hand, Fieldhouse argues that although Europe exploited Africa, she should not be held responsible for her present predicament. The real problem to Fieldhouse is that Africa does not have the tools that would make it compete effectively in the world market with other continents. According to him, Europe only received limited economic advantages from that it did not possess.¹⁰⁴ Arguing along similar lines, Crowder says that European incursions into important economically viable areas like the cocoa region of the Gold Coast and the coffee and palms regions of Nigeria, had dramatic consequences. Little was done to improve growing techniques and improve the standard of living of Africans. He also argues that an African who did not live within the area of European influence, witnessed limited changes. Crowder also argues that the small group of African businessmen did not share in the profits made by the

¹⁰³L.R. Gann and Peter Duignan, *Burden of Empire: An Appraisal of Western Colonialism in Africa South of the Sahara* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), v-vii, 229-31, 234 and 236-52.

¹⁰⁴D.K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967), 380-7 and 389-94.

Europeans.¹⁰⁵

Still discussing the impact of the European partition of Africa, Walter Rodney posits that from the period of slave trade the African society was destroyed politically and economically¹⁰⁶. Drawing his experience from Nigeria, Onimode argues that the colonial financial system facilitated the transfer of Nigeria's economic surplus to Great Britain.¹⁰⁷ According to Boahen colonialism exploited, scared but also developed¹⁰⁸. The problems of Africa linked to European colonization and administration have also been elaborated by Collins, McDonald Burns and Ching.¹⁰⁹

The Berlin West African Conference of 1884 - 1885, apparently signalled the creeping European economic and political dominance in Africa and accelerated its shift from informal to formal involvement in African politics. This led to the drawing up of artificial boundaries, which more or less authenticated various territorial claims by European powers, but, which also divided historically homogenous, contiguous and closely related, sometimes kinship communities. According to Asiwaju, boundaries indicate the sharp edges of the territorial limits within which the states exercise their distinct jurisdictions¹¹⁰. They are, therefore, the lines of contact, more often for conflict than for harmony, between rival systems of governmental control. A boundary could also be the line of delimitation or demarcation between administrative units or between geographical regions of various types.

¹⁰⁵Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 345-53.

¹⁰⁶Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982), 223-238

¹⁰⁷Bade Onimode, *Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: The Dialectics of Mass Poverty* (London: Zed Books, 1982), 42-3, 48-9, 51-2, 91-3 and 103-4.

¹⁰⁸Adu A. Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 94-112.

¹⁰⁹Robert O. Collins, James McDonald Burns and Erik Kristofer Ching, *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 267-315.

¹¹⁰A.I.Asiwaju (ed), *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International boundaries, 1884-1984 on, Nigeria*: Lagos University Press, 1985), 63.

Three fundamental concepts underline the establishment of international boundaries. These are: the definition, the delimitation and the demarcation stages¹¹¹.

Since the attainment of political independence by most African countries in 1960, few if any country, have not had cause to worry about the position of their boundaries in relation to their neighbours. Most of these boundary conflicts resulted from the separation of ethnic groups which, hitherto, then, were considered as a single entity. For example, Somalia, whose essentially continuous cultural area, was severed into the separate colonies of British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, the Northern frontier District of Kenya and the Ogaden province of imperial Ethiopia; the Maasai cut nearly in half by the Kenya-Tanzania border; the Bakongo separated by the Gabon-Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo-DRC) and DRC-Angola boundaries; an Lunda astride the DRC - Angola and DRC - Zambia frontiers; the Zande or the Azande cut by boundaries into different parts in the Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR) and DRC¹¹². The European powers embarked on the separation of these ethnic groups because of greed and egoism. What was uppermost in their minds was to secure spheres of influence and this was motivated chiefly by economic, social and politic considerations in what became popularly known in the second half of nineteenth century as imperialism.

Apart from the separation of these ethnic groups, almost all African countries have got boundary conflicts with their neighbours which, at times, have resulted in wars. For instance, Morocco resorted to war with Algeria to maintain the integrity of its boundaries over Western Sahara. Somalia claimed land from Ethiopia and Kenya over Ogaden while Cameroon was not in the best of terms with Nigeria

¹¹¹See S.W. Boggs, *International Boundaries: A study of Boundary Functions* (New York: Academic Press); J. Anene and Godfrey Brown, *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century's* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University , Press 1966); V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, vol.2: From Colonial to Post Colonial Periods* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

¹¹²Asiwaju, *Partitioned Africans*, 176.

over the Bakassi Peninsular¹¹³.

Today, there appears to be renewed interest in the re-interpretation of African history during the colonial period with focus on boundary relations¹¹⁴. There is emphasis by indigenous scholars on the reconstruction of the history of different African countries and ethnic groups. Following this argument is how colonialism impacted on the Boki nation of the Cross River region of Nigeria and Cameroon. The paper attempts to highlight the problems that were created by the Germans and British by facilitating the disintegration of the Bokis. Asiwaju provided a checklist of indigenous groups which were bifurcated by the Cameroon-Nigerian boundary at the end of his edited authoritative volume¹¹⁵. The disintegration of the Boki nation is one of those groups which are still to be given adequate attention in the literature on boundaries. It is based on that premise that this chapter attempts to fill a hiatus in the Cameroon historiography with focus on boundaries, a contribution which will definitely anchor with an ‘intellectual odyssey’ which Professor Fanso had started way back in 1983¹¹⁶.

Before the Boki encounter with the Germans and the British, the people were very united. The Boki were known to have a very strong clan spirit prior to colonial control. The arrival and activities of the Germans and British forced many of them to migrate into Nigeria, a creation of the British. They went to meet their kith and kin and

¹¹³Boutros Boutros Ghali and N. Asfahany *Les conflits des Frontières en Afrique* (Paris: Etudes et Documents, 1973).

¹¹⁴For instance, see Walter Gam Nkwi “Boundary Conflicts in Africa: The Case of Bambili and Babanki-Tungoh of Northwest Cameroon, c. 1955-1995,” in Walter Gam Nkwi, *Voicing the Voiceless: Contributions to Closing Gaps in Cameroon History, 1958-2009* (Mankon, Bamenda: Langaa RCIG, 2010); M.Z. Njeuma, “Cameroon-Nigeria Frontier: Model for Culture of Peace, 1890-1991” *Journal of the Cameroon Academy of Sciences*, vol.1.2, no.3, 2002: 183-201.

¹¹⁵A.I. Asiwaju (ed) *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1984* (Lagos: Lagos University Press).

¹¹⁶V.G. Fanso, “Trans- Frontier Relations and Resistance to Cameroon-Nigeria Colonial Boundaries, 1916-1945” (PhD Thesis, University of Yaounde).

abandoned Cameroon. Others settled among the neighbours notably the Eba-Mbus and the Ekokisam¹¹⁷. Many of those who went into trading with the grassland region of Cameroon and Nigeria fought over slaves and the scarce items of trade like kernels and manufactured goods from Nigeria¹¹⁸. The colonial authorities tormented, excluded and maltreated the traditional leadership and this led to tension and division between segments of the community of the Boki and other neighbouring groups.

Location of Boki

The Boki are both in Manyu Division of Cameroon and Ikom District of Nigeria. Like the Efik and Ekoi and the Ejagham, they were split by the Germans and British who prided themselves with exploiting rather than developing their African colonial possessions¹¹⁹. Ngoh in his paper on the Anglo-French rivalry over the Misselele plantations in Cameroon, argues that it was imperial economics, politics and territorial questions that determined European international relations and African concerns were only but secondary at the very best and at worst these concerns were considered irrelevant. Barkindo's opinion on this issue of European partition of Africa is that Europeans were very concerned about territories for profitable economic exploitation. This explains why they occupied areas which

¹¹⁷The Eba- Mbus and the Ekokisam are the closest neighbours of the Boki. In the past their boundaries included the unoccupied country between Ekokisam and Obonyi to the North, the Munaiya River on the East, the surveyed Nigerian boundary on the West and the Cross River on the South. For over the years interaction and inter-marriages have made the different groups able to speak the language of the other.

¹¹⁸Read more the slave trade in Banyang country and the Cross River region of Cameroon by consulting E.S.D. Fomin and Victor Julius Ngoh, *Slave Settlements in Banyang Country 1800-1950* (Limbe: Presbook, 1998).

¹¹⁹Victor Julius Ngoh, "Anglo-French Rivalry over the Misselele Plantations, 1916-1920: A Case Study in the Economic Motives for the Partition of Africa," in *Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. xii, no. 2, 1995:274.

were rich in human and natural resources. Their major concern was also to control prominent trade routes so that they could establish posts for custom duties and regulate trade to their benefit¹²⁰.

Some of the Boki or related villages in Cameroon include Abonando, Kajifu, Bodam, Dari, Oyi, Boka, Baje, Betime (Batime), Ekokisam I, Ekokisam II, and Ewisi. The villages of Kajifu, Betime, Abonando and Ekokisam were initially thought to be of Boki extraction but later studies revealed that the first three villages were partly Anyang and partly Eba-Mbu. The Ekokiasam ethnic group is related to Boki through marriage. The people of Kajifu, Betime and Abonando speak Boki through close contact and inter-marriage. They also understand Anyang.

With little or no precision, the Bokis hold that they came from the North. This is testified by the fact that although most of them lived on the banks of the Cross River for a long time they could not make use of it as a water people. They, however, lived as a peaceful community until were confronted by the Germans.

Methodology

In this chapter we used both primary and secondary sources. Files were gleaned in the National Archives Buea (NAB). These files were corroborated with secondary data. The secondary data consisted of book Chapters and journal articles which mostly focused on boundaries. The thesis of Professor Fanzo was quite helpful and relevant as it helped to inspire the authors.

The Germans Confront the Bokis

After the annexation of Cameroon in July 1884, the Germans began a tortuous journey into the interior to see what lay beyond the coast¹²¹. There were several reasons that prompted the German

¹²⁰Cited in *ibid.*, 275

¹²¹Harry Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1938).

movement into the interior of Cameroon after annexing it in 1884. Among these was the recession in the world's economy at the time. They also wanted to put an end to the mercantile monopoly of the Dualas¹²². They were determined to subjugate any group that stood on their way as they penetrated the Kamerun territory into the interior.

Around the Cross River region, they met the Bokis who had a very strong clan spirit. This spirit was unperturbed even after the establishment of a boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria by Britain and Germany. As a sign of their attachment to the ethnic group, they continued to identify with their eponymous ancestor, Sisong-Soki and his successor, Enaw Kempa. The Sokis were and have remained a great trading community in items like kernels, yams, corn, pumpkin seeds, pepper and cloth bought from Calabar in Nigeria. They were known for their skills in the exploitation of salts springs and commercialization in the Cross River Region¹²³. The Germans were probably interested in using them to foster their trading activities.

When the Germans met the Bokis in the early years of the 1900s, they opted to collaborate with these aliens but not for long. The Bokis collaborated by tracking down runaways following the killing of Von Puckler at Akwa during the 1904 resistance. Sooner than later, war broke out between the Germans and the Bokis because the German clerk at Baje killed a Soka boy because of a woman. Angered by this, the Sokis joined the Eba-Mbu and launched a ferocious attack on the German installations at Nsanakang¹²⁴. The installations were already in ruins following previous raids. Unfortunately for them, six months after the attack, the Germans reacted ferociously by launching a punitive expedition on the Boki villages and those of Eba-Mbu-Ekokisam.

This episode contributed to the disintegration of the Boki nation.

¹²²Gann and Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, 166.

¹²³Henry Kam Kah, "A Priceless Commodity: The Politics of Salt Production and Commercialisation in the Cross River Basin of Cameroon 1916-1961," *African Study Monographs*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2006: 4-5.

¹²⁴File No. Af24, 1592126, Boki Eba-Mbu and Ekokisam Assessment Report, National Archives Buea (NAB).

All those who could not desert the area following the German punitive expedition were killed. The rulers of Abonando Kajifu, Sodam, Dari and Oyi were hanged and many of the people were left without leaders¹²⁵. Similar to the German alliance with the Muslims kingdom of Kotokoli to subdue the Konkomba and the Kabure in Northern Togo¹²⁶, they tacitly allied with Saje in the Cross River region of Cameroon. This led to suspicion among the Boki villages. Many of those who migrated into Nigeria never returned. Settlement sites also changed and new ones were established, all as a result of the fear of vulnerability to the German assault.

The commitment of the Germans towards the control of the strategic Mamfe area contributed to the dismemberment of the Boki nation. The Germans appointed an official chief in the place of the legitimate clan chief. Since the official chief was responsible to the German colonial authorities, he did not command much respect from among his people who were opposed to his appointment in the first place. Since the official chief got his position by appointment and not through hereditary, many people did not recognize his right to authority. The chief tried to impose his authority by the use of the soldiers who were also charged with the maintenance of law and order¹²⁷. His iron fist policy only helped to alienate him from the population who opposed him.

The German labour policy also has a destabilizing effect on the unity of the Bokis. In an attempt to get labour for the coastal plantations and the labour districts, the Germans forced the entire village of Sodam and Saje to migrate and only returned in 1916 after their defeat of the joint Anglo-French force¹²⁸. Many people in the neighbouring villages left the region because they detested the forceful recruitment of labour for the plantations by the Germans. Dreadful stories were told of life in the plantations and many young Bokis regarded work in the plantations as death traps. In 1900, the

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Gann and Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, 165.

¹²⁷File No. 24, 1592126, Boki Eba-Mbu and Ekokisam Assessment Report, NAB.

¹²⁸File No. Ce (1916)2, 43/17, Ossidinge Division Annual Reports 1916, NAB.

government passed a decree authorizing plantations to establish independent cemeteries to bury their dead. The consequences of the German labour recruitment were very great. The shortage in food, poor shelter in plantation areas, surplus work, disease and little or no medical care led to a high rate of mortality. Out of about 1, 430 people who got to the plantations from Bamenda in 1913, nine months after 157 had already died¹²⁹. After the German defeat of 1916, the British became the new colonial power.

British Administration in Boki

The German administration of Cameroon lasted for barely thirty years and its impact on Boki was not very great. German effective influence in this area was for barely about twenty years, which was a short for great change to have been effected. British administration in the area lasted much longer and its impact was greater.

Like the Germans, the British contributed towards the destabilization of traditional administration. This was done through the establishment of the Native Court, which replaced the clan council in a majority of cases. The clan chief, who before then was very powerful, was reduced to a mere figure-head. His symbol of authority, which was an ancient sacred leopard knife or the *Bapong* became useless. His authority over issues such as the payment of dowry, the value of livestock and food was taken away from him and entrusted in the hands of the Native Court and the District Officer¹³⁰. His only luck was that unlike Kaberega of Bunyoro, Uganda, who spent his last years on the Seychelles Island, he remained within Boki territory. Cameroon appreciated the application of Indirect Rule in Tanganyika in 1931. Except in detribalized areas, Cameroon holds that the natives supported Indirect Rule because their system of law and custom was maintained; he further argues that any native council that was not based on tribal authority was opposed by the people.¹³¹

¹²⁹Victor Julius Ngoh, History of Cameroon since 1800 (Limbe: Presbook, 1996), 85.

¹³⁰File No. 24, 1592/26, Boki Eba-Mbu and Ekokisam Assessment Report, NAB.

¹³¹Collins Burns and Ching, Problems of Imperial Africa, 131-2 and 138.

There was, however, very little regard for tribal authority in the Boki land. What actually happened was in line with the view of Sir Philip Mitchell who was of the opinion that once traditional communities were broken up and old loyalties destroyed, the organizations that emerged were less responsible, less loyal and more dangerous. The reduction in the authority of the clan head of the Boki gave room for different village heads to pursue independent actions. The long run consequence was the weakening of the clan consciousness. Villages of Boki extraction fought with one another instead of collaborating. There was this conflict between Danali and Bodam over the felling of trees in Bodam for the carving of canoes. After independence, different Boki villages became more self-centred and competed against one another for scarce resources.

It was during the period of British rule that the old Boki criminal and civil laws were shattered and replaced by the British law. In pre-colonial Boki, their criminal law prescribed that anyone who was found guilty was hanged or shot dead. This was on the instructions of the clan chief. A notorious thief who for one reason or another was not killed was eventually sold into slavery. People dreaded doing evil since the *Ekpe* which was a regulatory society that maintained law and order was seriously at work¹³².

This *Ekpe* society (also spelt *eppe*) otherwise known as the *kwap* among the Boki was a male society that was and is still found also among the Anyang and Banyang ethnic groups of the Cross River region. It regulated the activities of the people. In the pre-colonial past, it commanded a lot of respect but colonial rule weakened its role of safeguarding peace¹³³. The British regarded its activities as barbarism

¹³²File No. 24, 1592/26, Boki Eba-Mbu and Ekokisam Assessment Report, NAB.

¹³³For more on this read Henry Kam Kah, "Religious Cults in Conflict with Colonial Forces, 1916-1961: Its Impact Life of Mamfe Division in British Southern Cameroons," Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies, 1-32; Oben Victor Enoch, "Politics, Power and Authority among the Stateless Societies of Manyu Case of the Banyang and Keaka under German and British Rule," Postgraduate Diploma, University of Yaounde, 1987; Henry Kam Kah, "Regulatory Societies, Peace Building and Maintenance in the Cross River Region of Nigeria and Cameroon,"

and decided to introduce their own laws governing criminal activities in the territory. The colonial authorities condemned the regulatory society and did everything possible to frustrate its activities. Clan members who no longer consulted the *ekpe* became enemies to members of the society. This led to tension between different factions in Boki land. With very little respect for the *ekpe*, many young people did not bother to keep to Instructions of the regulatory society which were intended to maintain law and order.

Civil matters in old Boki were handled without creating division between the parties involved but the British system of justice created more problems. When there was a serious breach of contract, the debtor would have the wife seized and given to the creditor. In case of a female child, the debtor could partake in the dowry once she had reached the age of marriage¹³⁴. These were checks and balances which helped in maintaining peace and stability in the clan. When the British condemned this system of justice, some people began to contest the decision of the clan council and even the clan chief. This led to the weakening of the powers of the clan chief and the unity that hitherto existed among the Bokis.

Colonial Boundary and the Dismemberment of the Bokis

The role of Britain in the dismemberment of the Bokis was made clear during discussions on the boundary between Britain and France. In 1919, the Divisional Officer for Mamfe, W.E. Hunt, opined that even if Cameroon as a whole was to be handed over to the French, all the Bokis and Ekoi should be placed under the government of Nigeria. Supporting his position, Hunt argued that these people were dismembered from their main stock in Nigeria during the making of the Cameroon/Nigeria boundary¹³⁵. The argument put forward by Hunt only goes to confirm the argument of Gordon and Gordon that

Forthcoming; Ute Roschenthaler, "Transacting Obasinjom: The Dissemination of a Cult Agency in the Cross River Area, Africa, vol. 74, no. 2, 2004: 241-276.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵File No. 449/1920 B, Ce 1920/2, Ossidinge Division Annual Reports 1920-1. NAB.

the creation of artificial boundaries in Africa separated cohesive social groups and logically well-established areas¹³⁶.

Besides, the establishment of the Takamanda Forest Reserve in 1926 created problems because the clandestine exploitation of the forest resources led to serious disagreement between the different Boki villages. The Danale people from Ikom-Nigeria fought with those of Bodam in the Bodam bush over the felling of trees for the carving of canoes. These trees which included *Khaya ivorensis stuadtia* sp, *Pterocarpus Chlorophora* and *Terminalia ivorensis* were scarce species which the British jealously preserved for their future use¹³⁷. The whole idea of the Forest Reserve created animosity not only among the Bokis but also between the Bokis and the British. In the long run, the problem of inadequate farmland caused by an increase in population led to demand for more farmland¹³⁸. On 12 March 1965, Chief Enoch of Kajifu village wrote to the District Officer for Akwaya asking for an increase in farmland from 200 acres to 300 acres. He *complained* that there was scarcity of *land* on which to *cultivate* crops. *It should be noted that although villages that bordered the* Takamanda Forest Reserve were given the right to *collect* some resources within the Reserve, from time to time, they were harassed by the colonial agents. A further consequence of the establishment of the Forest Reserve was the restriction of interaction between the villages of the area since it was not permitted that people go through the reserve.

The trade in slaves though outlined in the British Empire in 1833 continued somehow in the whole Mamfe area including Boki up to the 1920s. Cases of slave dealing tried between 1916 and 1921 were 44 in number. In one of his letters dated 22 October 1934, the Divisional Officer for Mamfe complained of slave dealing and child stealing that was still going on. In one the statements he said "... unfortunately there are persons who still carry on this traffic and it has by no means been

¹³⁶April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon eds. *Understanding Contemporary Africa* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 53.

¹³⁷File No. 613, Takamanda Forest Reserve Vol. II, Divisional Delegation of Environment and Forests Mamfe Manyu Division.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*

universally wiped out¹³⁹.

Since it became a new source of acquiring wealth, different Boki villages competed with one another for slaves from the Basho, Assumbo and Amassi areas¹⁴⁰. These slaves were sold at Ikom and other trade items especially manufactured goods were bought for sale back home. Apart from creating animosity among the Bokis, slave trade also created problems between the Bokis and their neighbours notably the Eba-Mbu. There is the case of an Ebisi man who was seemingly given money to buy a slave by a Boki. When he failed to bring the slave, the Bokis attacked the Eba-Mbus. Unfortunately, the tides turned against them¹⁴¹.

In addition, the *Oyimanni* which was a crowd pulling play among the young men would go round collecting peoples' property, food and livestock. After this, a feast was organized and there was amusement and merry-making. The argument which was put forward by the British was that this play usually incited highway robbery¹⁴². What is important to note is the fact that if banning the play was because it incited highway robbery, it was at the same time destroying a people's culture which was a unifying force. The British certainly did not understand that this play was a symbol of unity among young people of Boki land and by extension the entire ethnic group. The action was disadvantageous to a once very united people. V. G. Fanso, lucidly says that "The Boki and Assumbo people who had neither recognized the boundary nor accepted their division by it were formally reunited with the rest of their kinsmen in Nigeria"¹⁴³.

¹³⁹File No. Sa(1920)3, 3311920, Slavery in Re 1920-1921, NAB; File No. 195, Sa(1933)8, Slave Matters, NAB; Fomin and Ngoh, Slave Settlements in the Banyang Country, 58-61

¹⁴⁰File No. 24, 1592/26, Boki Eba-Mbu and Ekokisam Assessment Report, NAB.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²File No. 449/1920, Ce (1920)2, Ossidinge Division Annual Reports 1920-1, NAB.

¹⁴³Fanso "Trans- Frontier Relations...", 174.

Conclusion

The significance of this chapter to the historiography of colonialism and that of Cameroon cannot be over emphasized. The Bokis happen to be among the few groups to have experienced the administration of two imperial powers in Africa. One of the greatest impacts of colonialism on the Boki was that they were split into two- a greater proportion went to Nigeria and the other to 'Cameroon, This experience was painful because at times it was difficult to move freely across an international boundary dividing Cameroon and Nigeria. This chapter reveals that at the heart of the forest, one could find a people who were very highly attached to their clan. This is a glaring example of an exception to the rule for it is a known fact that forest societies unlike those of the Grassfields, were highly segmentary. This only opens another chapter on the history of the very enterprising Bokis who today are very concerned about restoring the one and indivisible spirit that they were known for many years behind. Finally, although the Bokis were divided by a colonial boundary which they resisted at the same time like most cases, the border as Fanso has echoed "... demonstrated in practical terms that the former colonial boundaries could be made to unite rather than divide African people"¹⁴⁴.

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¹⁴⁴Ibid., 489a

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Issues in the Cession of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon

By

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Abstract

Controversies trailed the decision of Nigeria to abide by the judgment of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, which ceded the oil rich Bakassi Peninsula to the Republic Cameroon. Some writers have argued that the prevailing situation and circumstances in the international environment informed the concession of Nigeria to yield what is traditionally regarded as parts of its territory to a neighbouring country. Others are of the view the incoherent domestic environment coupled with the weakness of the Nigerian state in terms power relation in the international system put Nigeria at a disadvantaged position on the matter This chapter interrogates the nexus between domestic imperatives and commitment the international obligation especially on boundary issues to analyse the behaviour of Nigeria. It discusses the salient contentious issues raised by the decision and arrives at a conclusion that though the various domestic variables were not adequately explored to showcase the depth of the commitment of the government to the welfare of its citizens, the judgment of the court is capable of creating a geopolitical crisis that might affect the territorial integrity of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Keywords: restiveness, oil politics, secession, adjudication, national interest, corruption, colonial boundaries

Introduction

Territory as the basis of economic production occupies a prominent space in the development of international system. When a State loses or wins a war in the international system, it means gaining or losing territory. Territorial increase adds to the wealth and power of the State. In fact, the struggle to gain or retain a territory often leads to interstate conflicts. The conflict situation could be engendered by the economic and strategic values available in such territory (Sarna and Johnson-Ross, 2006). Apart from this, the loss of a territory casts aspersion on the integrity of the State. To regain such territory, States often consider it as a “matter of national honour and’ a symbol of the sovereignty and territorial integrity” (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2009:174).

In international relations, border disputes tend to be among the most intractable problems. According to Goldstein and Pevehouse, “States seldom yield territory in exchange for money or any positive reward. Nor do States quickly forget territory that they lose involuntarily (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2009:174). Interstate border disputes dot discourse in the international system. While some have been resolved through peaceful means in terms of bilateral talks or adjudications, there are others where force was applied. In fact, at the root of every major war and interstate conflicts in the contemporary global system, is the claim and counter-claim over territory.

Several conventions in the international system stipulate directly or indirectly that changes of inter-states boundaries are acceptable *only* through peaceful means. Nevertheless, crisis situations where boundaries or boundary-related issues are at stake are frequent in the international system. Some boundary problems are settled before they escalate into serious crises. Others seem irreconcilable and involve frequent military exchanges. Regulated or not, boundary and border relations will remain a potential source of conflict in the international system as long as the economic values of the territory have direct link *with* the national interests of actors. Such developments put boundaries on the agenda in international relations. Boundary brings states together in the international system. In fact, one way or the other, it

defines relation among States. By this, it is difficult for actors sharing common boundaries to totally ignore each other. Essentially, boundaries create a *prima facie* hostile situation, since “my neighbour is my enemy”(Nordquist, nd).

Boundaries are by definition shared. They define a state territorially and provide in this way a condition for state sovereignty, yet their very nature as relational is an infringement upon the same sovereignty. Thus, a boundary can be a potential mirror of internal disputes as well as root of an interstate dispute in itself. Apart from this, boundary relations are based both on internal and international politics. Most importantly, domestic legislation ratifying boundary agreement is essential in making it a valid international legal document. Thus, boundary dispute in the international system almost necessarily constitutes a complicated mix of interests, actors and actions.

One of the peaceful settlements through adjudication by the World Court in recent times, was the Nigerian-Cameroon dispute over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula. Nigeria ceded the territory to Cameroun based on the judgment of the International Court of Justice at The Hague on October 10, 2002. But then, such decision could not be explained in terms of the postulations realism and the general principle of dominance in the international system. In the realist calculation, Nigeria has sufficient national clout not to cede the territory. For one, Nigeria and Cameroon are not equal in terms of population, physical military might, economy and prominence in the international system (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2009:177). Then, why did Nigeria behave in such a manner without exploring the available diplomatic avenues at the domestic and international environment? Why did the leadership of the country allow international law to take precedent over its domestic law? Of what use is the legislative apparatus when an international judicial body could redraw the map of the country and alter its constitutional provisions without the due process of the domestic law? These are the various issues this chapter seeks to analyse.

Realism, Idealism and Territorial Disputes in International System

Scholars have sought at different times to explain the behaviour of actors in their interactions in the international system. Thus, there are several paradigms adopted by scholars and writers to analyse issues in the international environment. One of these paradigms is realism. To the realists, actors in the international system “struggle for power in an effort by each to preserve or preferably, improve its military security and economic welfare in competition with other countries (Rourke, 2008:20). They describe international affairs as the struggle for power among self-interested actors with a pessimistic view about prospects for eliminating conflicts (Walt, 2001:28). According to Morgenthau, the global system is

a world of opposing interests and conflict among them, moral principles can never be fully realized, but must at best be approximated through the ever temporary balancing of interests and the ever precarious settlement of conflicts (Morgenthau, 1993:3).

Though classical realists hinge their analysis on six main principles, however, they see the human nature as inherently self-seeking. To this end, political realism sees international politics as “the concept of interest defined in terms of power” (Morgenthau, 1993:5).

This genre is of the view that political struggle among actors in the international system is inevitable and that it is foolhardy to trust other actors. To the realists, “respect for **moral** principles is a wasteful and dangerous interference in the rational pursuit of national self-advantage” (Kegley, Jr. and Wittkopf, 2004:37). Actors are wont to pursue the objectives meant to achieve national survival in a hostile global environment. To this end, therefore,

no mean is more important than the acquisition of power, and no principle is more important than self-help. In this conception, state sovereignty, a cornerstone of international law, gives heads of

states the freedom - and responsibility- to do whatever is necessary to advance the state's interests and survival” (Kegley, Jr. and Wittkopf, 2004:37).

In doing this, they contend that the quality of the political leadership was essential in implementing good foreign policy policies. Morgenthau specifically says that to understand foreign policies, one must combine the motives of the leader with “his intellectual ability to comprehend the essentials of foreign policy, as well as his political ability to translate what he has comprehended into successful political action” (Morgenthau, 1993:6). John Mearsheimer has a pessimistic view that the ruthless and dangerous business of international politics would likely remain (Mearsheimer, 2001:2).

The neorealist perspective about power in the international system is not too significant different. Politics at the global level is also seen as a struggle for power because of the anarchical structure rather than human nature (James, 2002). Even the postmodernist theories of international relations, especially the economic theories, do not deviate significantly from this realist perspective. In all, it should be noted that the realist postulation does not promote equality. In view of this, the exercise and pursuit of power are relative. Actor can only behave in this manner when it has sufficient political Clout, measured by series of factors such as the national economy, military might, both actual and potential, to pursue its self-interested objectives without challenge. In this case, this postulation may not be sufficient enough to explain territorial dispute between weak states with different political clouts in the international system.

On the other hand, the liberal school holds the view that state actors would, as a matter of fact, consider its national interest in arriving at any particular course of action. Unlike the realists, the human nature, to the idealist, “is essentially good or altruistic, and people are therefore capable of mutual aid and collaboration through reason and ethically inspired education” (Kegley, Jr. and Wittkopf, 2004:34). To this school, the pursuit of global peace was possible by reducing the disorder created by the absence of an overarching central global authority. Though crisis and anarchy could not be ruled out, the

frequency could be reduced “by strengthening the institutional arrangements that encourage its disappearance” (Kegley, Jr. and Wittkopf, 2004:34). Thus, the existence of global institutions like the International Court of Justice (ICJ) fits into the proposition of the idealists to maintain global peace through mediation. It should be noted that this perspective supports reforms at the international and domestic environments “so that democratic governance and civil liberties within states can protect human rights and help pacify relations among states” (Kegley, Jr. and Wittkopf, 2004:34).

Again, the powerful actors would take advantage of the fluid international environment to dominate the weaker states and even dictate the terms of such reforms to their own advantage. For instance, the unequal power relations in the United Nations have made its agencies networks of promoting and protecting the interests of the veto wielding permanent members of the Security Council. A more radical approach came along with the advent of the Cold War. The Marxist orientation sought to provide an alternative cause of conflict in the international system. To this school, the contradiction inherent in capitalism engenders unequal power relations that promote dependency. Both the orthodox and neo-Marxist scholars do agree that capitalist orientation facilitates unholy alliance between the advanced states and the developing countries with a view to exploiting the weaker actors (Frank, 2001). When the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) collapsed in the 1990s, the euphoria that greeted its advent started to dwindle. Like the realist school that sprang up consequently upon the outbreak of the Second World War, this paradigm was an instrument of the ideological rivalry that engulfed the international system after the end of the war. Nevertheless, it provides an insight into the world of dependency in the international system.

There have been series of modifications and scholarly works to complement these paradigms in explaining interstate interactions in the international system. This suggests that the postulations are not sufficient to explain the behaviours of actors. To this end, it is instructive to note that the domestic environment still dictates, to a greater extent, the behaviour of states in their decisions in the international system. There have been works on the primacy of

domestic politics in shaping the behaviour of states in global politics (Walt, 2001:34). Domestic institutions are potential instruments capable of helping states deal with the perennial problem of uncertainty in the international system. This is where territorial issues often remain intractable in international system. As a potent domestic instrument, states explore the dynamics of their territory to negotiate diplomatic deals to promote their core objectives.

Boundary Disputes in the International System

In the international system, there are constant efforts to prevent the escalation of major global war. Thus, the likelihood of war has declined. However, there exists series of territorial and boundary disputes (Dominguez, 2003: 22; Nordquist, nd). Some of these disputes are legacies from the nineteenth century, especially the aftermath of colonialism. There are several international conventions which stipulate that the acceptable changes of inter-state boundaries are through peaceful means (Nordquist). In fact, African governments agreed to adhere to the sacrosanct nature of the boundaries inherited from colonial times stipulated in the 1963 Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (Sama and Johnson-Ross, 2006:104).

In traditional African context, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular State or polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it (Fanso, 1986). Thus, boundary was the zone where two States were united or joined together. This means that African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact (McDougal, III, 2009). This is what the ICJ failed to recognize in its judgment. In fact, the argument of Nigeria along this line was rejected by the court. This standpoint was informed by the conception of boundaries by the European states as lines or points of separation (Fanso). Thus, Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kin divided by the boundary had become foreigners (Sama and Johnson-Ross, 2006:104). They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the

traditional ones with which they were familiar. To them, the former were only important to the white men who made them and were not immediately concerned about their existence until they were checked at crossing points. It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers (Fanso, 1986:72).

The Bakassi Peninsula Crisis in History

The boundary dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula between Nigeria and Cameroon has root in the colonial occupation of Africa (Asemanya, 2006). Bakassi was settled around 1450AD by the Efik tribe within the framework of the Kingdom of the old Calabar in Nigeria. Prior to the period of colonial occupation, Bakassi was part of the Old Calabar area presently in Cross River State of Nigeria. In September 10, 1884, the Kings and Chiefs of the various settlements in the area signed a treaty of protection with the British occupant of the area against the rampant invading forces of other European countries, particularly Germany (Awofeso, 2007:77; Knowledge rush). Unfortunately, these protectorate agreements did not have precise definition of boundaries (Omoigui, 2004). The essence was to protect their fish farms and other natural means of livelihood. By the virtue of this treaty, the British crown was to extend “gracious favour and protection” to the people of the area. This Treaty enabled the British to exercise control over the entire territory (knowledge rush). Thus, the area became a protectorate of the British crown. This was the situation until the different British protectorates became colonies.

The economic possession of the peninsula made it a source of controversy. This factor informed the series of Anglo-German agreements of 1913 (Omoigui, 2004). The Germans were interested in the abundant shrimps in the area while Britain was seeking for an “uninterrupted and secure sea lane access to Calabar, a key trading post. Thus, German conceded the navigable part of the area to Britain while the Bakassi Peninsula was ceded to Germany (Omoigui, 2004). The outcome of the First World War led to the division of German colonized territories between France and Britain. Subsequent boundary

demarcations between the two countries were at the behest of the colonial powers without the consent of the local people. Thus, traditionally and historically, Bakassi peninsula is a Nigerian territory.

Contemporary dispute over the peninsula along the Nigeria-Cameroon border has been a matter of historic proportions, especially along the Cross River to the Sea section (Mbuh, 2004). Since the 1960s, the major problem was how to locate the exact boundary of each country on the peninsula after the British Northern Cameroon voted to join Nigeria (Abegunrin 2003:44). This problem became compounded when oil was discovered in commercial quantities. The Cameroon Republic therefore, started exploring for oil along the borders, and, at times, trespassed into Nigerian territory. Nigeria's response was the establishment of her boundaries on land and sea, and making firm arrangement for securing these boundaries with armed patrols (Abegunrin, 2003:44-45).

The post-independence developments further created problems. The 1961 plebiscite of the people living in Northern and Southern Cameroons, the Yaoundé II and Maroua Declarations of 1971 and 1975, respectively, played vital roles in the deepening disputes. Of vital importance was the latter declaration, which was not ratified by the Nigerian government as stipulated (Abegunrin, 2003:45). These documents conceded portion of Nigerian territory in Bakassi to Cameroon. The then military regimes and subsequent civilian government of Alhaji of Shehu Shagari did not ratify the agreements and as such, could not be implemented. This further created war situations. In 1981, 1993, 1994 and 1996, the dispute nearly degenerated to war between Nigeria and Cameroon (Baye and Schouame, 2005). In 1994, Cameroon brought the case of the border dispute between the two countries to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for adjudication.

Implications of ICJ Judgment

On 10 October 2002, the ICJ at The Hague delivered its judgment on the entire land and maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria based on the Anglo-German Treaty of 1913, the Yaoundé II and Maroua Declarations of 1971 and 1975, respectively (Aghemelo

and Ibhasebhor, 2006). The judgment confirmed Cameroun's sovereignty over portions of the territory in question and ordered Nigeria to "expeditiously and without condition withdraw its administration and military or police from the Bakassi Peninsula" (ICJ, 2002). The then President Guillaume of the ICJ summarizes the verdict in his speech of 10 October 2002, as follows:

The Court first decided that the land boundary between the two countries had been fixed by treaties entered into during the colonial period and it upheld the validity of those treaties. It moreover rejected the theory of historical consolidation put forward by Nigeria and accordingly refused to take into account the *affectivities* relied upon by Nigeria. It ruled that, in the absence of acquiescence by Cameroon, *these affectivities* could not prevail over Cameroon's conventional titles. Accordingly, the Court decided that, pursuant to the Anglo-German Agreement of 11 March 1913, sovereignty over Bakassi lies with Cameroon ... Finally, the Court indicated the precise course of the boundary channel of the Akwayafe to the west of the Bakassi Peninsula. The Court also fixed the maritime boundary between the two States. Here, the Court, accepting Cameroon's contention, began by upholding the validity of the Declarations of Yaoundé" and Maroua, pursuant to which the Heads of State of Nigeria and Cameroon had in 1971 and 1975 agreed upon the maritime boundary between the two countries from the mouth of the Akwayafe to a point G situated at 8°22'19"longitude east and 4° 17' 00"latitude north (ICJ, 2002).

In a bid to effect this judgment, a tripartite meeting, facilitated by the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Anan, between Nigeria and Cameroon was witnessed by Britain, France, Germany and the United States of America, was held in Green Tree, New York on June 12, 2006 (Green Tree Accord, 2006). Article 7 of the agreement states that its contents were not meant to interpret or modify the judgment of the ICJ but sets out the modalities of implementation". Though Nigerian Government initially rejected the verdict of the International Court (U. N. Wire, 2002 Sango, 2002), the Green-Tree Agreement effectively

established Cameroon sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula (Baye and Schouame, 2005).

The ICJ's ruling raises a number of important issues. First, two competing perspectives of sovereignty are revealed - one historical and one Western in origin. While Nigeria harps on the ethno-cultural perspective, Cameroon relied on the Western standpoint. The fact that the ICJ relied on Cameroon's conventional titles derived from colonial treaties indicates that the jurists gave precedence to contemporary Western constructions of the notions of boundaries and sovereignty at the detriment of the historical consolidation. Nigeria's argument turned on practice as opposed to theory, a perspective that privileged the Nigerian indigenes (Sama and Johnson-Ross, 2006). The implication of this is the minimalist consideration for the cultural imperatives in African foreign policy and conflict resolution (McDougal, 2009:65-67).

Secondly, the cession has security implications for the Nigerian military (Olaleye, 2007:8; Channels TV, 2008). According to Nigeria's Military Chiefs, the cession of Bakassi Peninsula would limit the maritime operations of the country's military operations in the area. The Peninsula is a strategic location for coastal defence and sea routes into the Calabar port.

Another implication is the plight of the 300,000 Nigerian citizens living in the area. Article 3 of the agreement guarantees the Nigerian nationals residing in the area against harassment by the Cameroonian government. To be sure, Article 3 of the agreement states as follows:

1. Cameroon, after the transfer of authority to it by Nigeria, guarantees to Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi Peninsula the exercise of the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights and in other relevant provisions of international law.

2. In particular, Cameroon shall: (a) not force Nigerian nationals living in the Bakassi peninsula to leave the Zone or to change their nationality; (b) respect their culture, language and beliefs; (c) respect their rights to continue their agricultural and fishing activities; (d) protect their property and their customary land rights; (e) not levy in

any discriminatory manner any taxes and other dues on Nigerian national living in the Zone; and (f) take every necessary measure to protect Nigerian nationals living in the Zone from any harassment or harm (GAT,2006).

Presently, these people are victims of continuous harassment by the Cameroonian gendarmes Akpan, 2009). A similar implication was the failure of the ICJ to distinguish between ownership Bakassi as a territory and ownership as a people (Akinterinwa, 2007:30). The ruling on addressed the territorial ownership and closed its eyes to the people. Thus, while the GTA gave Nigerians the opportunity to retain their nationality in a foreign territory, the ICJ ruling behaved contrary. This explains the constant harassment of the people by the Cameroonian gendarme. This is where the primacy of oil as a determining factor in the ICJ ruling comes in. For one, t territorial dispute was a creation of the colonial activities of France, Germany and Britain. The President of the ICJ that delivered the ruling, Guillaume, was a French citizen; and, France, the former colonial master of Cameroon, had its interest in the region. As Idehen has noted,

Confident of her claim and emboldened by her former colonial master (France), Cameroon Republic asked the international Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague to adjudicate on the disputed peninsula .. .for purely political reasons, the court headed by a French president, upheld a legal position, which is contrary to all known laws and conventions, thus legitimizing and promoting the interests of former colonial powers. (Idehen, 2008:115).

Ordinarily, since France, Germany and Britain were interested parties to the suit their judges ought to have disqualified themselves in the spirit of fairness and justice. This brings into the fore, the issue of imperialism at the United Nations' activities. Even if Nigeria had refused to submit itself to the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ, these world powers would still have ensured the cession of Bakassi to the Cameroon Republic. This implies that weak states cannot get justice from the ICJ.

Another thing to be noted is that nowhere in the circumstances and event of these treaties does it mention the representation or consent of the indigenous nations, who along with their land and resources, were being traded like mere property by these colonialists. To some people, the judgment was an extension of colonialism in the 21st century. In fact, it depicts the perpetuation of imperialism at the global level. To a great extent, it reinforces the fact that weak states in the international system are at the mercy of the advanced countries especially, the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The Green Tree Agreement guarantees freedom for Nigerians staying in the area to retain their Nigerian identity. The determined sovereignty over Bakassi and the withdrawal and official transfer of the contentious Peninsula by Nigeria in obedience to the ICJ is raises certain contentious issues which this chapter seeks to address.

Issues Generated by the ICJ Judgment

The cession of the Bakassi Peninsula to the Republic of Cameroon has been shrouded in controversies and contentions. At the international level, the ICJ verdict of October 10, 2002 was a relief to stave off an open military confrontation between the two neighbouring countries. The United Nations envoy, Kieran Prendergast stated that Nigeria's decision to abide by the ruling was an example of the peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for international law (IRINnews.org, 25 November 2006). Prendergast, who was the Chairman of the UN Follow-up Committee on 'the implementation of the Green Tree Agreement and the verdict of the ICJ, expressed the mind-set of the global body saying that

today we are seeing the voluntary withdrawal of Nigerian forces and transfer of authority to Cameroun. This is going to be an episode to be studied by diplomatic institutions on how disputes can be settled in a peaceful process. There are many lessons here to be learnt and many disputes in the world that could be settled this way... This is a very good day for the two countries and the international community. An example has been set for others to

follow (Akpan 2006).

The Nigerian Governor of Cross River State as at that time, Donald Duke, expressed similar feeling thus:

The significance of the ceremony, indeed, lies in the fact that it is possible for African nations which find themselves in contest over territorial rights and other issues, to resolve the matters amicably on the round table and thus avoid the carnage, bloodletting, socio-economic and political dislocations which post-independence African states have inflicted on themselves ... African leaders should use this event to come to the realisation that while it is possible to win battles in the field, the peace and political stability which Africa requires to develop and take its proper place as a continent can only be achieved on the negotiating table (Akpan, 2006).

These feelings were understandable. Prior to this time, there had been fierce skirmishes between the military forces of the two countries along the Nigerian-Cameroon border especially in Bakassi Peninsula. The two contending actors were former colonies of rival European powers, Britain and France, which are permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations. Thus, the consideration transcends the promotion and protection of the national interests of neither Nigeria nor Cameroon. On the other hand, one could argue that Nigeria acted in its own self-interest because of the economic implications of the action. Thus,

Nigeria acted in its own self-interest, because turning the dispute over to the World Court and bringing in the UN to assist with implementation brought the kind of stability needed for foreign investment to develop the area's resources primarily oil (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2009:177).

Beyond this, Nigeria may be commended for promoting the interests of its citizens because in case of rejection, military actions may

endanger the security of the people. In fact, one of the reasons adduced by the government in rejecting the ICJ judgment was on the account that Nigeria would “not abandon her people and their interests ... it is not a matter of oil or natural resources on waters, it is a matter of the welfare and the well-being of her people on their land.”(U. N. Wire, 2002). However, this position negates the previous actions that ought to have been taken in form of a delayed diplomacy. In 1994 when Cameroon took the case to the ICJ, Nigeria submitted itself to the optional clause of the ICJ (ICJ, 1999). By this, Nigeria accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ; meaning that it compelled itself to abide by the decision of the court without appeal. However, Nigeria could have explored the existing declaration of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ). The Court states that: “No state can, without its consent, be compelled to submit its dispute with other states either to mediation or arbitration, or to any other kind of pacific settlement” (P.C.I.J. Report, 1923, cf. The Gaurdian2007:20). In clear terms, the ICJ, in its judgment expressed preference for an imperialistic connotation of African boundaries at the expense of ethno- cultural affinity and contiguity of the people. While Nigeria sought for historical consolidation, Cameroon’s position was based on Western constructs such as treaties and diplomatic agreements which the ICJ upheld (Sama and Johnson-Ross, 2006:113). It could be argued that Nigeria lost the case because it would be difficult to defend its position on ethno-cultural attachment in a Western court. The judgment raised certain issues that border on the controversies between domestic and international obligations.

Treaties in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999

Section 12(1) of the constitution stipulates that “No treaty between the Federation and any other country shall have the force of law except to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted to law by the National Assembly”. To accomplish this provision, sub- section 2 empowers the National Assembly to make law for the purpose of implementing a treaty even if the issues concerned are not included in the Exclusive Legislative List. The involvement of the legislature,

therefore, is limited to the domestication of treaties rather than ratification. There is a mark difference between treaty ratification and implementation (Egede, 2008). To ratify a treaty means that a country has established its consent to be bound by its content to implement. Ben Nwabueze in his analysis of the constitutional provisions for treaty in the 1979 constitution which by extension is repeated in the 1999 Constitution has argued that treaty ratification in Nigeria's presidential constitution was purely an executive act that requires subsequent implementation by the legislature (Nwabueze, 1983:255-256). This is unlike the provisions of the constitutions of the United States of America and Ghana that involve the legislature in the ratification and domestication of treaties (Egede, 2008). By implication, though the Nigerian constitution reflects the tenets of presidentialism in content, but the operation and implementation follow the inherited common law of Britain. Consequently, the president as the head of government and the State represents the totality of inter-state relations and "acts for [the] state in its international intercourse, with consequence that all his legally relevant international acts are considered to be action of [the] state" (Nwabueze, 1983:254). As logical as this argument may appear, it should be noted that the issue at stake borders on the balkanization of the state by ceding part of its territory to another country.

One of the contending issues is the position of the Green Tree Agreement (GTA) 2006 and the ICJ judgment of October 10, 2002. Some assumed that the GTA ceded Bakassi peninsula to the Republic of Cameroon. However, by the effect of the law, the peninsula became a Cameroonian territory with effect from October 10, 2002 when the ICJ established Cameroonian sovereignty over Bakassi Peninsula (ICJ, 2002; Awofeso, 2007:18). By the same token, Article 1, of the 2006 GTA states that "Nigeria recognizes the sovereignty of Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula" in accordance with the ICJ judgment (Green Tree Agreement 2006). The GTA, therefore, was just the document for the implementation of the judgment of the ICJ rather than a treaty that ceded Bakassi Peninsula (Egede, 2008). Thus, legislative repudiation of the agreement was effort in futility. According to Awofeso, the Nigerian Senate lacked the competence to legislate on

Bakassi because as of 2007 when the GT A was sent to the national assembly for domestication purpose, Bakassi Peninsula was already a Cameroonian territory (Awofeso, 2007:18). In November 2007, the Nigerian Senate in its plenary session voided the cession of Bakassi Peninsula insisting that the action was unconstitutional because the due process of the law was not adhered to (Oota, 2007; Okocha and Chinwo, 2007). In fact, the Nigerian dailies were relished with news items and editorials based on the deliberation on an issue that had been decided since 2002. The legislature acted too late. What seemed to be the legislative attempt to “lock the stable door, after the horse had bolted” was, in the characteristic nature of the Nigerian legislature on sensitive issues, a mere playing to the gallery.

The incoherent relationship between the legislature and the executive was responsible for this malaise. For one, the legislature displayed its ignorance of the constitutional responsibilities in the conduct of foreign policy. This is not a new development. During the Second Republic, the legislature discovered that the institutional and infrastructural facilities needed to ensure effective discharge of their responsibilities were inadequate (Ogunbadejo 1980). Thus, latter attempts by the legislature to nullify the GTA were of no effect simply because it was a belated action.

Domestic and International Obligations

Nigeria, as a sovereign nation in the international community has a dual obligation. First, it is obliged to comply with the provisions of its domestic laws. Section 1 (1) of the Nigerian constitution affirms the supremacy of the constitution and that “its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria.” Section 13 of this statute mandates the Nigerian government to observe and apply the provisions to enforce its fundamental obligations as contained in section 14 (2) (a-c). This section states thus:

14 (2) (a) Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derives all its power and

authority;

b) the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government;

(c) the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.

These provisions are explicit to show that the Nigerian government is bound to adhere to these obligations.

It is obvious, therefore, that in the case of the cession of Bakassi Peninsula, these provisions were violated in intent and purpose. One, the acceptance of the ICJ verdict should have been the prerogative of Nigerians through either a plebiscite or referendum, even if such was a delayed diplomacy in order to explore other possibilities (Peake and Krutz, 2004). It could be argued, however, that the position of the government was to ensure the security and welfare of the Nigerian population in the area since outright military confrontation could endanger the lives of the people. Recent incidences of harassment of the people by the Cameroonian gendarmes attest otherwise (Akpan 2006). The second obligation has to do with Nigeria's membership of the international community. Section 19(d) of the constitution states, as part of the foreign policy objectives, that the country would have respect for international law and treaty obligations seek for settlement of international disputes through negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication. Thus, the acceptance of the ICJ verdict was in conformity to Nigeria's foreign policy objectives. Apart from this, Nigeria is a member of the United Nations Organization (U.N.O) and therefore a party to the UN Charter. The ICJ is one of the agencies of the UN. Article 94(1) of the UN Charter states that each member of the United Nations undertakes to comply with the decision of the international Court of Justice in any case which it is a party. Failure to respect this obligation could lead to imposition of sanction by the Security Council of the UN to enforce the judgment (Egede, 2008).

What is the position of municipal law in international relations? There are different interpretations of the relationship between domestic law and international law. Articles 27 and 46 of the Vienna

Convention on Law of Treaties, 1969, provide states with the opportunity to implement international treaties in conformity to their municipal law. Article 27 states:

A party may not invoke the provisions of its internal law as justification for its failure to perform a treaty. This rule is without prejudice to Article 46.

Article 46 (1&2) reads:

A state may not invoke the fact that its consent to be bound by a treaty has been expressed in violation of a provision of its internal law regarding competence to conclude treaties as invalidating its content unless that violation was manifest and concerned a rule of its internal law of fundamental importance. Violation is manifest if it would be objectively evident to any state conducting itself in the matter in accordance with normal practice and in good faith.

The 1999 constitution of Nigeria is an internal law of fundamental importance. It has been pointed out earlier that its provisions have binding force. However, in relation to the GTA and ICJ judgment, the invocation of the provisions of these articles depends largely on the power relation of the actor in the international system. Actors do venture to take certain diplomatic risks to advance their interests in the international system. The United States declared war against Japan partly because of the Pearl Harbour incident of 1941 (Rourke, 2008:239).

Oil Resources and the Bakassi Conflict

The Bakassi Peninsula crisis has its root in the economic interests that the area possesses. Actors involved in the disputes, especially the Western powers, have their stake the valuable natural resources rather than concern for human lives and consideration for human welfare. Asobie has noted, this economic benefits drivable from the territorial

endowment underlie most international conflicts (Asobie, 2003). To him, even when other interests or motives were presented as issues in dispute, the hidden and real motivating factors are economic, in particular, contention over some natural resources. Specifically, the Bakassi conflict was aggravated by the large deposits of oil discovered under the region's sea. According to Abegunrin, the Bakassi Peninsula "had always been rich in maritime resources and with the discovery of oil, the territory became a portion of land worth dying for" (Abegunrin2003:44). To this end, both the Nigerian and Cameroonian governments renewed their disputation over the area because of the discovery of oil rather than loss of territory in terms of geographical boundary (Idehen, 2008). This explains why the Nigerian government readily accepted the results of the plebiscite in Southern Cameroon in 1961, to be part of Republic of Cameroon but rejected the verdict of the ICJ in 2002 even when it secured a substantial territory in northern Cameroon and gained some people from Cameroun. The Bakassi peninsula overshadows all the other territories in value because it is an oil-bearing territory.

This is the issue that informed the ICJ judgment. The strategic location of the Peninsula as *well* as the interests of the Western powers in the oil resources necessitated the need for peace. Nevertheless, it is apposite to point out that this ruling did not consider the place of cultural affinity. Already, the minority groups in the Southern Cameroon, where Bakassi Peninsula now belong, have considered the judgment as an opportunity to renew their hostility towards the Republic of Cameroon (Sama and Johnson-Ross, 2006). The assumption and plan was to rally the minority groups together with a view to demanding for a separate country out of Nigeria and Cameroon. The primacy of oil found in the region could precipitate further crisis of greater dimension which may attract international attention. A repeat of the Niger Delta episode in the area could likely consolidate the interests of the Western powers in the area. The anarchical international system is an environment of several possibilities depending on the measure of power at the disposal of the actors involved. To this end, the ICJ verdict has opened a vista of such opportunity that could be explored and exploited.

Conclusion

This Chapter has identified and discussed salient issues and implications of the cession of Bakassi Peninsula to the Republic of Cameroon. It is obvious that the dynamic of power international politics takes precedence over the domestic interests of the weaker states in conflict resolution. Even if there were windows of diplomatic opportunities to explore in the international system, actors are faced with the challenge of identifying strong allies to accomplish their national interests. Here, Cameroon had the upper hand in terms of its support. For the international system, the area involved was strategic to their national interests. For one the Gulf of Guinea is dear to the United States of America because of the location and the rich natural resources available. As such, any crisis between Cameroon and Nigeria would disrupt the commercial activities in the area.

Apart from this, France did not have a close affinity with Nigeria as it does with Cameroon. The support for Cameroon, therefore, was an extension of its national interests in Africa. Besides, France openly supported and assisted the Biafra side during the Nigerian civil war (Ogunbadejo, 1976:21-23). President Charles de Gaulle of France did not hide his opposition to the strength of Nigeria as against the other Francophone West African countries. So many factors were responsible for this. For one, France was afraid of

a united and successful Nigeria presenting a strong pole attraction to the weak and fragmented Francophone states around it and so, by implication, threatening to upset the balance of power in the region to the detriment of the French influence; the attraction of oil; de Gaulle's distrust of the Anglo-Saxons; [and] his general dislike of Federation; ... (Ogunbadejo, 1976:21).

This position did not totally change though there were rapprochements between the two countries after the civil war. Thus, France influence as a catalyst for the constant skirmishes as well as the invitation of the ICJ for adjudication over Bakassi Peninsula was understandable. Cameroon's remains one of the proxies of France in

Africa. The wealth of Cameroon indirectly would be beneficial to France because of the nature of the relationship with its former colonized territories. Thus, with Bakassi Peninsula in Cameroon, France multinational oil companies would have control of the oil resources.

We hold the view that the central issue in the cession of Bakassi Peninsula was international judicial conspiracy. The environment and the setting of the judgment coupled with the “limited effectiveness” of the ICJ in enforcing its rulings (Rourke, 2008:287) attest to this viewpoint. In 2003, the United States of America displayed its power and ignored the ICJ ruling against it in respect of the case brought against it by Mexico over the U. S. violation of the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (Rourke, 2008:287). To affirm its position, the administration of President George Bush, Jr. withdrew its consent to the treaty provision which allowed the ICJ to adjudicate on the matter. Not only that, the U. S. Supreme Court refused to entertain a suit seeking for the enforcement of the ICJ ruling. Till date, that judgment has not been obeyed. If Nigeria or any other developing country without such a clout in the international system resorts to similar action, what would be the reaction of the global elite?

The cession of the Bakassi Peninsula, therefore, was manifestation of Nigeria’s weak position in terms of power relations in the global system. Even if the available domestic institutions and structures were deployed to frustrate the ICJ ruling, Nigeria lacks strength the requisite h in the global environment to push its national interest beyond the limit of its conflicts with the interest of the hegemonic power in the international system.

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Cameroon-Nigeria Dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula: A Specimen of Collective Peace Approach

By
Mark Solak Funteh

Abstract

For the last two decades, the right over border areas has ignited series of quarrels and disputes between states, Sustaining *World* concern. Most of these crises are directly related to the management and ownership of natural resources like oil, water and fisheries within the border zones. Often, the strength of the belligerents' claims of and their sustained interest in the disputed territories prolong peace initiatives. Some schools propound the concentration of "one formula-one interventionist" as the best option to resolve conflicts¹⁴⁵. But evidences of such interventions in *today's World* are yet to convince more critical conflict analysts and resolvers like the emerging collective Peace School. The collective peace school argues that the use of variant efforts and strategies in resolving border conflicts is more efficient. This chapter falls in line with this argument discusses the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsular and explores, in the main, the alternating strategies employed by both parties and the international community in settling the issue; the issue being the *right* over the oil rich land and sea resources of the area and the fate of the inhabitants of the area. The interest of investigating this affair was not only prompted by the cost of the crisis on both nations and the interest it ignited on the international community, but also due

¹⁴⁵A. Ibhabhor, "Colonial Legacy in Africa, A Deadly Influence" in *The Historian Croft*, Volume 8, series 3, 2008, pp. 13-14; R. Dillon, "Violent Conflict in Me ta Society," in *American Etluwiog':t*, Vol. 7. No.4. 1980, p. 658.

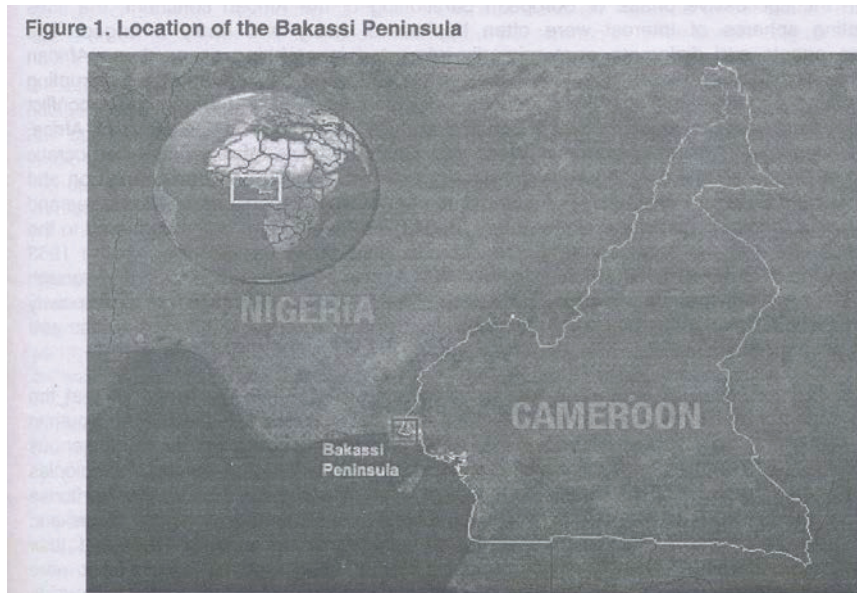
to the significance of its negotiated resolution to diplomacy and world peace.

Keywords: dispute, specimen, collective peace, approach, Bakassi Peninsula

Résumé

Depuis ces deux dernières décennies, la question de droit sur le territoire, frontalier anime les querelles et les disputes entre les Etats, ainsi que l'attention de la communauté internationale. La plupart de ces crises sont directement liées à la gestion ou à la possession des ressources naturelles à l'instar du pétrole, de l'eau et des ressources halieutiques aux frontières. Souvent, la force des réclamations des belligérants est leur intérêt pour les territoires disputés remettent en cause les initiatives de paix. Certaines écoles de Penses présentent l'idée de «une formule, un interventionniste» comme étant la meilleure option pour une résolution des conflits. Mais, il est de nos jours évident que de telles initiatives sont loin de convaincre les analystes les plus critiques des conflits, ainsi que les médiateurs; à l'instar l'Ecole ou du courant de Penses de paix Collective qui est en pleine émergence. L'école ou le courant de la paix collective soutient que le recours à une variété d'efforts et de stratégies dans la résolution des conflits frontaliers est plus efficace. Notre étude s'inscrit dans la logique de cette Pensée. Elle statue en effet sur les différences frontalières entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria au sujet de la péninsule de Bakassi et explore principalement les stratégies alternatives utilisées par les deux parties, ainsi que la communauté internationale pour sortir de crise. Cette faut-il le rappeler avait pour trame la souveraineté sur ce territoire de Bakassi réputé pour sa richesse en pétrole et en ressources maritimes, et ceci au détriment de ses habitants. L'intérêt de notre investigation dans cette question n'est pas seulement lié au coût de la crise pour les deux pays ou pour la communauté internationale, mais aussi au sens que revêtent les négociations ou les résolutions pour la diplomatie et la paix mondiale.

Mots Clés : Différend, spécimen, paix collective, approche, péninsule de Bakassi



Source: Mashood Issaka and Kapinga Yvette Ngandu, rapporteurs “Pacific Settlement of Disputes: Lessons from the Bakassi Affair and the Greentree Agreement,” <http://news.bbc.uk/2/hi/afrika/7559895.stm>, 6 June 2011 .

Introduction

The African colonial territories, which have attained independence and national sovereignty, cannot in a strict sense be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture; they are, indeed, the arbitrary creations of colonialism. The manner, in which European states descended on Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century in their scramble for territories, was bound to leave a heritage of artificially controlled borders that now demarcate the emerging African states, and serve as a source of conflict among many African states. Reflecting on the emergence of

new states in contemporary Africa, Davidson believes that their history begins anew. They reappear today in the sad evening of the world of nation-states. Yet their own tradition, he notes was seldom of narrow nationality. Their genius was for integration - integration by conquest as the times prescribed, but also by an ever artful mingling and migration. "They were never tolerant of exclusive frontiers"¹⁴⁶. The nineteenth century imperialism cut across boundaries and peoples and left for Africa, the problems of redrawing frontiers on a rational plan.

East and Moody¹⁴⁷ claim that all political boundaries are artificial because they are demarcated by human beings. The accidents of history, the vagaries of geography and the exigencies of economics have all played a part in determining even European boundaries. But the special circumstances operating in Africa make international boundaries doubly artificial in the sense that they are not, like most European boundaries, 'the visible expression of age-long efforts of the indigenous people' to achieve political adjustment between themselves and the physical conditions in which they live.

In the successive phase of European partitioning of the African continent, the lines demarcating spheres of interest were often haphazard, hasty and badly arranged. The European agents and diplomats were primarily interested in grabbing as much as African territory as possible, and were not unduly concerned about the consequences of disrupting ethnic groups and undermining the indigenous political order. This generated great conflict between states such as those between Ethiopia and its neighbours in the Horn of Africa between Nigeria and its neighbours in West and Central Africa, between the Democratic Republic of Congo and its neighbours in the Great Lakes region, and between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsular. For a long time after independence, border skirmishes and wars between African states were relatively rare, and governments more or less adhered to the sacrosanct nature of the boundaries inherited from colonial times as laid down in the 1963

¹⁴⁶B. Davidson, *Old Africa Rediscovered* (London: Longman, 1967).

¹⁴⁷W.G. East and A.E. Moody, *The Changing World* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956).

Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). However, both indigenous and foreign efforts have constantly been put in place in the face of these African disputes. This explains why authors have multiplied interest as regards colonialism and boundary, boundary activities and disputes among African states.

Rouke¹⁴⁸ assesses at length the legacy of colonialism in Africa, pointing out that the industrialisation of the North was one of the factors that caused the colonisation of the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He shows that Africa was largely controlled by its indigenous peoples in the 1878 but had, by 1914 become almost totally subjected and divided into colonies by the European powers. The colonial boundaries had little relationship to the territories occupied by the various indigenous peoples, grouping nations together in some cases and dividing them in others. Within seventy years, virtually all of the colonies regained their independence, but many of them have been troubled by the legacy of trying to get two or more states to live peacefully in a single state. The strength of this document is the fluency with which it transmits the general trend of European colonial imposed boundaries on Africa and their consequences.

Fanso reinforces Rouke's ideas. He says the notion and function of the term "boundary" differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. In traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular State or polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it. In this sense, the boundary was the zone where two States were united or joined together. In other words, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. European states, however, conceived of boundaries as lines or points of separation. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the former German colony in 1916 provided that inhabitants living in or near the border region had six months from the time that the border was delimited to express their intention to settle in a region

¹⁴⁸J.J. Rooke, *International Politics on the World Stage* (New York: Dushkin/McGraw Hill, 1997).

placed under the jurisdiction of the other colonial power. A problem was thereby created. The Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kin divided by the boundary were now 'foreign'. They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the traditional ones with which they were familiar. They thought the former were only important to the white men who made them and were not immediately concerned about their existence until they were checked at crossing points. It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers.¹⁴⁹ Such an impact was directed in reflected the Nigeria-Cameroon border of Bakassi.

In fact, the permeability of the Cameroon-Nigeria border caught the attention of Elgerbert Hohene, Jonathans Ekalo Kate and Edward Wise, who investigated cross-border economic activities. According to them, there has been an increase in the actual quantity of cross-border flows, as well as a deepening of the penetration of cross-border operations into the heart of the national territories. This implies that cross-border operations have undergone some structural reorganization. According to them, the socio-economic interactions of the respective indigenous populations are carried on with little regard for the colonial demarcation. Because the boundary is ill-defined and unimportant to the people of the area, they do not confine their socio-economic activities to particular areas. Indigenes in both countries are able to evade gendarmes from Cameroon and police, customs and immigration officers from Nigeria given that they are very familiar with the terrain.¹⁵⁰

Akanmode, Kolapo, Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, and Sanusi on their part discuss the Bakassi Peninsular and the International Court of

¹⁴⁹V. G. Fanzo, "Traditional and Colonial African Boundaries: Concept and Functions in Inter-Group Relations", *Presence Africaine*, 1986, 139, 3: 58-75.

¹⁵⁰Elgerbert Hohene and Jonathans Ekalo Kate. *Frontless Frontiers in the Gulf of Guinea* (Ibadan: Ibkoko Publications, 2002); Edward Wise, *The Joggling of Colonial Legacy on the Continent* (Nairobi: The Crose. 2006).

Justice Akanmode's descriptive geographical account¹⁵¹ of the Bakassi Peninsular puts the value of the population of the area to be mostly Nigeria. He presents the Peninsular as a paradox; a community that subsists in the midst of plenty of fish and oil deposit, but is ravaged by abject poverty. Briefly recounting the clash story between Cameroon and Nigeria of 1993 and the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of 10 October 2002, he questions the verdict of the court and influence on the future of the inhabitants of the area.

In the same light, Kolapo, Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor¹⁵² give a critical analysis of the far-reaching implications of the ICJ ruling on the Nigerian state. Their emphases are on the security implications, the social structures, economic jeopardy of the Nigerian state among others and the pride of the people as a whole like these authors, Banansi¹⁵³ says that the Judgment made little or no sense. His question is "How do you cede a people with a different Culture, language and background to another nation whose background differs completely?" He insists that the Bakassi people are Nigerians who cannot become Cameroonians overnight. He points out the need for the Nigerian government to appeal the World Court for a review of the judgment. Banansi's writing is too sentimental with shallow knowledge about the genesis of the disputed boundary. He falls in line with the school which believes that in order for a conflict to be properly resolved, one interventionist and one strategy should be employed. This is because collective intervention efforts set in many actors and strategies, which confuse the interventionists, and hence distort the goodwill of the peace processes.

Contrary to this opinion is the collective peace theory which sees collective action as the better option to settle boundary disputes. This

¹⁵¹V. Akanmode, "Bakassi Peninsular: Nigeria vs. Cameroon at last, the Judgment," Punch, 2002, pp. 4-5.

¹⁵²As cited by A.T. Aghemelo and S. Ibhasebhor, "Colonialism as a source of Boundary Dispute and Conflict among African States: The World Court Judgement on the Bakassi Peninsula and its implications for Nigeria" J. Soc. Sci., 13 (3), 2006: 2.

¹⁵³Walter Banansi, *The World Faces Conflict, What Choice to Make*, (Cape Town: Laumba Press, 2007), pp. 67-71.

concept does not limit itself to nations coming together, forming a common club and trying to resolve a dispute, but including a combination of endeavours from different individuals and groups at different instances to help check a common situation, commencing with the conflict parties. With this, different measures are employed at different intervals with varied degrees of success chained up¹⁵⁴. It is in this light, therefore, that this chapter attempts a demonstration of this paradigm with the evolution of the peace process in the Cameroon-Nigeria border clash over the Bakassi Peninsular. It discusses the efforts of both nations, the OAU, the UN, and ICJ in ending this low profile conflict. It is hoped that it serves as a reference to conflict resolvers in like situations.

Prologue to the Conflict

The Bakassi peninsula, an area of some 1,000 square km of mangrove swamp and half submerged islands, protrudes into the Bight of Bonny (previously known as the Bight of Biafra). Since the 18th century, the peninsula has been occupied by fishing settlements, most of whom are Efik-speakers. Today, the population of the area stands at 300,000, with no electricity, potable water (this has to be fetched from the mainland) or roads.¹⁵⁵ At first sight, it seems surprising that so neglected and unpromising an area should have excited such attention from governments of both nations over the past thirty years to the point of military confrontation

In July 1884, Cameroon became a German protectorate following the Germano-Douala Treaty, and in October, Germany notified the other European powers and the USA, in general terms, of the extent of this territory. On 23 July and 10 September 1884, the kings and chiefs of Old Calabar signed a treaty placing their territories under the

¹⁵⁴W. Rupesing, *International Response to Armed Conflict and Promotion of a Culture of Peace* (London, Arc Books, 2(05), 102-103; Mark Bolak Funtch, "Intra-Cameroon Baptist Convention Conflicts, 1954-2 Historical Investigation" Ph.D. Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2009.

¹⁵⁵Nowa Omoigui, *The Bakassi story*, <http://www.omoigui.com>.

protection of Great Britain. Other, kings and chiefs of the region, including those of Bakassi, signed treaties acknowledging that their territories were subject to the authority of Old Calabar and, consequently, under British protection. The Berlin Conference of 1884/85 recognised the validity of the British claim to this area as the Oil Rivers Protectorate, which became part of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893 and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900.¹⁵⁶ In 1906, Southern Nigeria, still including the Bakassi peninsula, came under the administration of the Colony of Lagos, but in November 1913 the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into a single Nigerian Protectorate, though Lagos remained a separate colony. By then, however, the status of Bakassi was already in question. Since 1884, it had been accepted that the boundary between British and German spheres of influence ran along the west bank of the Rio del Rey Anglo-German Protocol signed on 11 March and 12 April 1913 in Obokun and the exchange letters between governments of both countries on 6 July 1914 redefined the maritime boundary as the Akpayafe River, placing the Rio del Rey and the entire Bakassi peninsula under German authority.¹⁵⁷

But with the outbreak of First World War in August 1914 and its subsequent results which included the defeat of Axis Powers by the Allied forces and the eventually conquering of the German colony of Cameroon by an Anglo-French force, the territory was divided between Britain and France in 1919 under mandates of the League of Nations. The Bakassi peninsula formed part of the British mandate, along with a broad strip of territory along the Cameroon-Nigeria border. For now, British Cameroons was administered as an integral part of Nigeria. For the next forty years, the old boundary between

¹⁵⁶Ibid. Felicia Price, "The Bakassi Peninsula: The Border Dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon", ICE C Studies, No. 163, November, 2005.

¹⁵⁷W.V. Nugent, "The Geographical Results of the Nigeria-Kamerun Boundary Demarcation Commission cartographical Journal, 1914, pp. 630-51; Omoigui, .The Bakassi story; Victor. Julius Ngoh, Cameroon since 1800s (Limbe: Pressbook, 1989), pp. 276-277; Tazifor Tajoche, Cameroon History tn the 1rt and 20: Centuries (B Education Book Centre, 2(03) pp. 265-266.

Nigeria and Cameroon thus ceased to be a matter of any importance. In February 1961, the 1913 agreement again came to the fore when the UN conducted a plebiscite in the British Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons to decide their independence by either joining the independent Nigeria or reunifying with *La Republique du Cameroun*.¹⁵⁸ The plebiscite included the people of the Bakassi peninsula, which Nigeria, rejecting the 1913 delimitation, claimed to have been an irregular procedure. Nonetheless, the majority of people decided to vote for this second option. It is perhaps important to note here that there existed 21 polling stations on the Bakassi peninsula itself, and 73 per cent of the voters opted to “achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon”.¹⁵⁹

In fact the importance of the peninsular to both Cameroon and Nigeria was ignited when both discovered the oil rich nature of the area. Donnalt Wet¹⁶⁰ records that these nations, at first, did not pay attention to the Peninsula because of its remoteness, inhabited by a population considered inconsequential. However, when the oil and other natural resources and minerals were discovered in the peninsula, attention from both countries and also from colonial connections were ignited to create tension and/or argument over the control of the land,

¹⁵⁸Ngoh, *Cameroon since 1800s*, p. 227; V.T. LeVine, *The Cameroon from Mandate to Independence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1971.

¹⁵⁹General Assembly resolution 1608 (XV) of 21 April 1961; In 1962, Tafale Baleya’s Nigerian’s government confirmed its approval of the results of the plebiscite in a Diplomatic Note No. 570 of March 27, 1962 to Cameroun, which included a map showing Bakassi in the newly reunified Cameroun. From then on, until the 1990s Nigeria would have no serious administrative or military presence in the peninsula. [Even the much-touted ‘Bakassi local government’ was only created in 1997; a full three years after the case at the ICJ had begun]. During the first republic, in addition to the Embassy in Yaounde, however, Nigeria opened a consulate in Buea, capital of the Southern Cameroons -latter Western Cameroon. Presumably this was in recognition of the large number of Nigerians living in the region, even after the plebiscite.

¹⁶⁰Donnalt Wet, *The Power of Natural Possession in Foreign Policy*, (London, Archon Books, 2006), pp. 56-57.

which in some cases resulted to numerous deaths. Most scholars consider the escalation of the dispute only from the incidences of the 1980s, consequently by-passing one of the fundamental elements of the issue; the events from the 1960s, which significantly determined the trend and effect of the peace process.

The Conflict

Low profile clashes over the Bakassi Peninsula began as early as 1965, when a number of border incidents took place in a forested area of the old boundary between two villages - Bundam and Danare - near Ikom. The people of Bundam near Mamfe were attacked by the people of Ikom in the Cross River States of Nigeria due to mere suspicion across the border.¹⁶¹ Also on 6 May 1981 a more serious and the first serious skirmish between Nigerian and Cameroonian forces occurred when Nigerian patrol boats came under fire on the Akwayafe River. Five Nigerians were killed and three seriously wounded.¹⁶² In May and June 1991, the Cameroonians entered nine fishing villages, hoisted their national flag, and announced that they were renaming the settlements. They also promised that health and education facilities would be provided, though they demanded the payment of taxes¹⁶³. Ngoh explains that these people were well-informed of how to evade taxes and did so with great skills.¹⁶⁴ By this time the governments of Nigeria's President Ibrahim Babangida and Cameroon's President Paul Biya were far too occupied with their shared experiences of the difficulties of 'democratization to allow the possession of a few fishing villages to stand in the way of good neighbourliness.¹⁶⁵

One can say that the change in the leadership in Nigeria and the firm re-entrenchment of the soldiers at the head of affairs was

¹⁶¹Tazifor, Cameroon History, pp. 265-266.

¹⁶²Ibid

¹⁶³Richard Cornwell, "Nigeria and Cameroon: Diplomacy in the Delta," African Security Review. 15.4:52.

¹⁶⁴Ngoh, Cameroon Since 1800s, p. 277.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

responsible to the renewal of clashes in Bakassi. When Babangida came to the end-of his rule, he stepped down on 26 August 1993 in favour of an interim administration under the leadership of Ernest Shonekan. A period of grave domestic instability followed, culminating on 17 November with the announcement that Shonekan had been replaced by his deputy, General Sani Abacha, a man much less inclined to compromise says Cornwell. He maintains that in any event, on 21 December 1993, a battalion of Nigerian troops occupied Diamant and Jabane, two islands on the peninsula with the fishing communities requesting help from Calabar and Abuja against the Cameroonians.¹⁶⁶

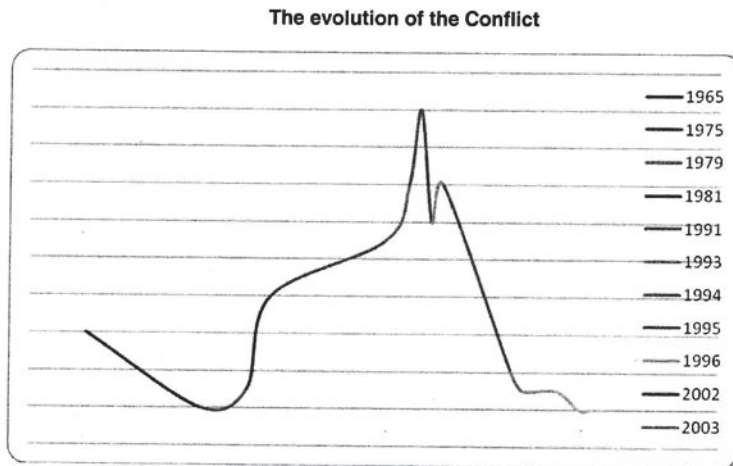
The crime of the Cameroonians was an alleged harassment and maltreatment of Nigerians living on the peninsula states Ngoh. He retains that they were notorious in tax evasion and for dealing in contraband goods; and the Cameroon government insisted on reinforcing her laws in her territory. In retaliation of the December 1993 occupation, the Cameroon's military response led to several deaths and immense destruction of property. The Nigerian troops occupied the localities of Idabato, Uzuma, Kombo and Janea in 1994. The fighting continued intermittently as both parties increased the quantity and quality of weaponry in the disputed territory, and by early in February 1994 over 18,000 people fled into Cross River State¹⁶⁷ until the end of the 1996 confrontations.

The 1996 year saw a renewal of confrontations. Nigerian troops which occupied the peninsular further clashed with Cameroonian troops that led to several deaths on both sides both capturing prisoners-of-war. Whatever, the affronts took another perspective in April 1996 when, according to presidential directive from the Nigerian General Staff Headquarters, Abuja no. GHQ/390 of 11 April 1996 urged the Cross River State administration to conduct election for the post of Councillor in the Bakassi Peninsula. Soh posits that this was in reaction to Cameroon government's actions. It reportedly conducted

¹⁶⁷Ibid; Nowa Omoigui, *The Bakassi story*.

council elections in the area in January 1996.¹⁶⁸ Both countries were, therefore, utilising the peninsula for their political egos and propaganda. However, the manifestation of such ego and propaganda could only be checked if both parties were ready to follow the course of peace and end the conflict (diagram 1 gives a graphical representation of the conflict).

The evolution of the Conflict



Source: Drawn by author from events of 1965-2010.

The Peace Efforts

Generally speaking, settlement of any long-lasting dispute is not always easy to come by. But the positive intentions to resolve the problem often create an atmosphere of dialogue among peace seekers, and help the conflicts to gradually fade away. Thus, the bringing to an end of the Bakassi crisis was indeed the work of many. A combination of endeavours from different groups at different instances helped to

¹⁶⁸Jonathan Soh. *The Cameroon-Nigeria Problem: Who is on the Provoke?* (Lagos:Inna Publishers. 1998).p. 27.

check the situation, commencing with the parties. These moves confirmed what Brandon says about resolving conflicts:

Conflict occurs when” people exhibit disagreeing desires. The Impact of a difference becomes so unendurably damaging and unadmired by the culprits, causing them to start hunting for its remedy. This occurs mostly when such has already escalated. But in some situations, one or all of the culprits, in order to pre-empt or check the escalation of the conflict, may also provide ample opportunities of talking things.¹⁶⁹

The talking of things out over the disputed area began since the 1960s by the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria.

Following the incident of 1965, both governments decided to look into the cause of the matter, and of course, the ill-defined boundary limits, which favoured smuggling was the matter. The Nigerian government initiated and Cameroon bought the option for the use of the joint commission strategy. The joint Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Demarcation Team was set up (with O.A. Aqua and Dennis Mbata representing Nigeria and G. Obenson, among others representing Cameroon), carefully and cordially studied the matter and settled on the respect for terms of the Anglo-German 1913 Treaty. They agreed to place inter-visible beacons along the 1913 boundary¹⁷⁰. Soh explains that this decision was based, among other reasons, on the desire of not abrogating OAU’s precepts on sovereignty and boundaries¹⁷¹. In

¹⁶⁹L. Brandon, *The Humour of Conflict* (Monrovia: n.p., 2005), pp. 65-67.

¹⁷⁰Charles Onowo, *The Bakassi Story* (Lagos: Inna cooperation, 2003), p. 23.

¹⁷¹Soh, *Cameroon-Nigeria Problem*, p. 31; In 1964, Nigeria approved the Cairo Declaration of the Organization African Unity of July 1964, committing African States to the inviolability of colonial borders. Specifically AHG/RES 16(1) states: “Solemnly declares that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders exist on their achievement of national independence.” Nigeria ratified this declaration, and by implication restated commitment to the Nigerian-Cameroun colonial border, as it had done in 1960 (Exchange of Notes with the and again in 1962 (Diplomatic Note 570).

January 1966 Major General Ironsi came to power in Nigeria. He committed his government to respect all prior international agreements made by the Balewa government. In July 1966, then Lt. Col. Yakubo Gowon came to power in Nigeria and committed his government to respect all prior international agreements made by the Ironsi and Balewa governments. .

However, the beacon-placement exercise was suspended due to the 1966 crisis ensuring the Nigerian civil war. Due to the support President Ahidjo gave to Nigeria during the secessionist attempts of the Biafra,¹⁷² which included the prevention of the flow of war materials to the secessionists that contributed favourably to the end of the crisis, the Nigerian Government remained grateful to Cameroon. With the reign of peace in Nigeria, both governments resumed consultations about the boundary issue. In 1970, both governments

¹⁷²Thus, Nigeria gained and sustained Cameroun's support during the civil war, was partly because Ahidjo afraid of the effect _ on southern Cameroons - of a precedent for secession by supporting Biafra. It was not a secret that southern Cameroons had always preferred self-determination. They were also in possession of French intelligence reports that Biafra would someday annex the former Southern Cameroon along with Fernando Po in a swath of territorial acquisitions in the area of the "Bight of Biafra". Adult male Ndigbo living in Cameroun at that time were, therefore, required every Saturday to report to designated open fields and kept there for many hours before being released by Police. In this manner Ahidjo kept a tight reign on their movements and threw them off balance. Not to report usually led to unwelcome domestic visits by Cameroun gendarmes. In supporting Biafra, France was interested in breaking up Nigeria, the large threatening Anglophone nation-state, but was not interested in the balkanization of Cameroun which it, therefore, kept discreetly informed of goings on inside Biafra. Such "intelligence" and "rumors" about alleged future Biafran intentions were never actually officially confirmed by anyone but it played into old rivalries in the NCNC and Eastern region going back to the days that Southern Cameroons was administered alongside Nigeria as a Trusteeship territory. After the war, General Gowon of Nigeria with Ahidjo's support - decreed that the name "Bight of Biafra" be removed from maps of the Gulf of Guinea close to the Nigeria-Cameroun-Equatorial Guinea border area. It was renamed "Bight of Bonny".

reconstituted the joint commission, which accepted the Anglo-German Agreement of 1913 as its point of reference. But disagreement in the commission centred upon the definition of the course of the Akwayafe River. For fear that such disagreement could prolong matters, both governments changed strategy to pursue the course of peace.

Both states shifted from a joint-commission strategy to the utilisation of highest-state- authority principle; the authority being the heads of states themselves (the presidential good office). In April 1971 presidents of Nigeria and Cameroon met in Yaounde. This, among others was because the issues rose by wartime policing of the border to prevent infiltration and exfiltration resurrected the old quest to clarify the boundary. This was amplified by Nigerian reports that Cameroon had been exploring oil along the undemarcated maritime border between both countries while Nigeria was busy fighting its civil war. It is this matter that was addressed on 4 April 1971 at Yaounde when Nigeria's General Gowon and Cameroun President Ahidjo accompanied by large delegations, signed the "Coker-Ngo" Line on British Admiralty Chart No. 3433 "as far as the 3-nautical-mile limit."¹⁷³ The status of the Bakassi peninsula proper was not an issue for discussion (maps from that period show Bakassi peninsula in Cameroun). A meeting of the Nigeria-Cameroun Boundary Commission, therefore, took place in Yaounde, Cameroun from August 12-14 where Gowon and Ahidjo signed charts defining the new maritime boundary.

Subsequently, the commission redefined the maritime boundary as the Ngoh-Coker line. This remarkable finding transferred the control of the Calabar channel to Cameroon and was shortly retracted by the Nigerian government. Both presidents again met in Garoua in August 1972 and in Kano in 1974, all resulting to the shift of the boundary slightly to the east of the Ngoh-Coker line, conceding the presence of Cameroonian oil rigs in the Calabar channel. From 30 May to 1 June 1975 Gowon and Ahidjo met in Maroua. The Maroua Accord certainly conceded Cameroonian sovereignty over Bakassi. But on 29 July 1975,

¹⁷³The Secretary-General off the Cuff,

<http://www.un.org/lappslsgloffthecuff.asp?nid=884>.

Gowon was overthrown by General Murtala Muhammed who repudiated the Maroua Accord. This also was General Olusegun Obasanjo's first opinion in August 1977 when he became the President. Nevertheless, the value of the Maroua Accord was later approved and the 1913 Agreement remained central to both governments. It is important to note here that the respect for these presidential agreements authored the reign of relative peace between both states in the peninsula in the 1970 decade. But things changed in 1981¹⁷⁴ as explained earlier.

With this Change, both governments alternated their strategy for pursuing peace; from accords to the application of fault-recognition-and-compensation politics. Meanwhile, the former represented a kind of preventive diplomatic application; the latter was aimed at managing the differences. After the 1981 incident where five Nigerian soldiers were killed, the Nigerian Government demanded an apology and compensation from Cameroon. Initially, Cameroon refused which ominously influenced relations between the two countries. In July 1981, however, Cameroon recognized its fault and undertook to pay compensation, and the crisis eased, with plaudits to Nigeria's President Alhaji Shehu Shagari for his restraint and for containing his hawkish military. The incident led to the resuscitation of the joint commission,

¹⁷⁴On May 16, 1981 Nigerian soldiers in three canoes were ambushed and killed by Cameroonian soldiers [Shehu Shagari: Beckoned to Serve", Heinemann 2001, page 358]. Nigeria said the incident took place on the Akpa Yafe (along the 1913 border) while Cameroun said it took place on the Rio del Rey deep inside Cameroun on the other side of the peninsula. Eventually, Cameroun apologized, based on the Nigerian insistence that its soldiers were on the Akpa Yafe (although there are some who still feel to this day they were actually on the Rio-del-Rey). Nigeria did not press the case then that even if the soldiers had been killed along the Rio-del-Rey; Cameroun still owed an apology, thus signaling that the Shagari government - at least subconsciously - recognized the 1913 Treaty as all previous governments had done. Treaty considerations aside, African countries ought to avoid unnecessary shed bloodshed over frivolous borders drawn by white men.

and the border dispute was officially reopened.¹⁷⁵ The official reopening of the border dispute, preceded the re-emergence of hostilities of the early 1990s and the introduction into the matter of the third-party prescription with efforts of regional and international organizations; OAU, the U.N security Council and International Court of Justice at the Hague (ICJ) occupying the central stage.

Whatever, the success of a third party is highly determined by three fundamental conditions. First is a willingness to negotiate on the part of the parties. Unless all the parties are willing to enter into some form of negotiation, no intervention can occur, even if a judge orders it. Second, the availability of a forum that is agreeable to the parties involved - literally the right place with the right conditions, the right convenor, the right setting, and a clear view of how parties shall relate to their constituencies. The third condition concerns the credibility of the intervener. The intervener must find that Archimedean piece of ground on which to stand with the parties, that is, literally have the standing or legitimacy with the parties so they will allow third party to assist in the dispute.¹⁷⁶

Of course the OAU's presence in the Bakassi palaver understood the stakes involved. Following the clashes in 1994, Cameroon discovered that bilateral talks with Nigeria could not entirely be the solution to the issue. Yet, it laid a formidable groundwork upon which third parties built their arguments for the peace search. As tension continued to mount and many lives were lost as a result of the conflict, the Cameroonian government took legal action on 29 March 1994 by filling a law suit against Nigeria at the ICJ on her sovereignty over the Bakassi and another on 6 June 1994 while complaining to the OAU Central Organ of Conflict Prevention and Management of the Nigerian illegal occupation of its territory. Cameroon was confident about this law suit following the resolutions of the 1913 Anglo-German

¹⁷⁵Samson Ijjoko, *Secret Dilemmas of the African Conflicts* (Lagos: Ife Printers, 1999), pp. 32-35.

¹⁷⁶J.D. Dennis Sandole and Ingrid Sandole (eds.), *Conflict Management and Problem Solving: Interperso International Applications* (New York, New York University Press, 1987), p. 17.

agreement and the 1975 Maroua declaration on the peninsula. During the 31st OAU Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1995, some African leaders tried getting Presidents Biya and Sani Abacha of Cameroon and Nigeria respectively to a round-table dialogue with the aim of resolving the dispute.¹⁷⁷ They relied greatly on the workability of highest-state-authority principle that previously helped sustained peace between both states. Unfortunately, its application this time did not yield the desired fruits. It was this result that prompted the OAU to assign Togolese President Eyadema to follow-Up the peace talks. Consequently, from 16 to 17 February 1996 Ferdinand Leopold Oyono and Chief Tom Ikimi, Cameroon's External Minister and Nigeria's Foreign Minister respectively, met in Kara, Togo and agreed as follows: that Cameroon and Nigeria recognize that the matter was with the ICJ; and they agreed to end all hostilities on the peninsula.¹⁷⁸ The Kara Accord was one of the bases of inspiration for the UN.

Following the non-respect of the Kara agreement, the United Nations Security Council expressed its position on the Cameroon-Nigeria conflict over the Bakassi Peninsula, namely both states should respect the Kara cease-fire accord, refrain from further violence, take necessary steps to return their forces to the positions they occupied before the dispute was referred to the ICJ, and they should redouble their efforts of reaching a peaceful settlement through the ICJ. It was here that the Security Council acknowledged the bilateral and regional efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful resolution of the dispute as well as the UN Secretary General's and ICJ's proposals to send a fact-finding mission to the disputed area.

A UN mission was dispatched to the area on 15 March 1996 and the court made an interim ruling. This found that the evidence in support of Cameroon's allegations of Nigerian aggression was contradictory and insufficient for a categorical ruling to be made, and Nigeria promptly hailed this as a victory. The other parts of the ruling, that both sides withdraw from positions occupied since 3 February and

¹⁷⁷Ngoh, *Cameroon Since 1800*, p. 330; Tazifor, *Cameroon History*, p. 267.

¹⁷⁸Ngoh, *Cameroon Since 1800*, p. 330; Tazifor, *Cameroon History*, p. 267.

that the ceasefire be observed, were simply noted barely a month later, between 21 and 24 April, the fighting resumed and only the arrival of the UN mission in mid-May seemed to have persuaded both combatants to greater discretion. In 1995 Nigeria's submission arrived at The Hague, questioning the competence of the court to decide a border issue at dispute between two members of the Lake Chad Commission. But this had no effect on the evolution of the court's findings. Before the court could make a ruling it was again approached by Cameroon, protesting against a renewed Nigerian offensive in Bakassi on 3 and 4 February 1996. Cameroon asked the court to rule on Nigeria's aggression and to demand the withdrawal of forces to positions held before the fighting of 3 February. It also demanded the cessation of all military activity to allow the court to gather evidence *in situ*¹⁷⁹. Grey says by the end of September 1996, matters still seemed no nearer a solution. The ICJ had announced no new findings, and the UN mission to the region proved to have a goodwill rather than fact-finding brief.¹⁸⁰

Matters dragged on indecisively until 2002, when the ICJ finally decided in favour of the Cameroonian claim. It is interesting to say that what seemed easy took eight years of intensive negotiations to settle. Representatives from both states worked hard to support their thesis and the ICJ listened carefully reviewing historical documents in a bid to arrive at a just settlement. Among the points Cameroon presented to justify their claim was the 1913 agreement in which the boundary was defined and signed; meanwhile Nigeria claimed, among others, that the most democratic way to decide Bakassi sovereignty was to conduct a referendum since according to it, the 300.000 inhabitants of the area did not want to be Cameroonians. On 10 October 2002, based on old colonial documents, the ICJ delivered a judgment in favour of Cameroon. The boundaries in the Lake Chad region were determined by the Thomson-Marchand Declaration of 1929-30 and the boundary

¹⁷⁹Ngoh, *Cameroon Since 1800*, p. 330; Roland Grey, "The Cameroon-Nigeria Border Crisis" in *The H·Craft*, volume 8, no.4. 2002: 225.

¹⁸⁰Grey, "Cameroon-Nigeria Border Crisis," 226.

in the Bakassi by the Anglo-German agreement of 1913.¹⁸¹

With this settlement, Nigeria was supposed to quickly and unconditionally withdraw its administration from the Lake Chad area under Cameroon's sovereignty and from the Bakassi Peninsular. Cameroon on its part was supposed to remove its citizens from anywhere on the new border between the two countries and the land boundary from Lake Chad in the north to Bakassi in the south was demarcated and signed by both countries. But weeks before the ICJ ruling, Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the UN invited President Paul Biya of Cameroon and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to and they met on 5 September 2002 in Paris in the presence of French President Jacques Chirac. Both presidents pledged to abide by the anticipated decision of the ICJ, and agreed to establish an implementation mechanism.¹⁸² But this was not the case with the larger Nigerian population, especially after the ruling was released in their disfavour. This created a political uproar in Nigeria, where some media went as far as identifying a Western conspiracy against them. In effect, the Nigerian government refused to withdraw from Bakassi or cede sovereignty as demanded in the Court's ruling.

This reaction called for further diplomatic interactions that resulted in compromise of position. Nigeria later compromised her standing for a breakthrough to occur. When Annan facilitated the formation of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission on 15 November 2002 at Geneva, with the aim of enabling a smooth handing over ceremony, the Mixed Commission did their work on the handing over logistics and recommendations on confidence-building between the states. On 5 August 2003, its meeting in Yaounde Hilton Hotel evaluated work and activities on the commission. It was observed that between May and July 2003, the following occurred: high level visits were made with the visit of President Biya to Nigeria (May 2003) and an exchanged visit by Nigerian Vice-President (July 2003); the Abuja Meeting of 10-

¹⁸¹Nowa Omoigui, *The Bakassi story*; Ngoh, *Cameroon Since 1800*. p. 330; Tazifor, *Cameroon History*. P.267; Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, "Colonialism as a source of Boundary Dispute. p. 3.

¹⁸²Tazifor. *Cameroon History*. 268; <http://news.bbc.uk/2/1/africa/7559895.stm>.

12 June 2003 established a working programme and a time table for the implantation of the 10 October ICJ judgement; both countries had paid in 1.25 million US dollars each to the UN Trust Fund as contribution to foster the demarcation of boundary exercise; Nigeria disclosed that a bill on the Border Region Development Agency, which was awaiting presidential approval would provide social infrastructure to the communities along the international boundaries; and Cameroon however expressed worries that Nigeria was yet to withdraw her troops and administration from Cameroon territories.¹⁸³ A few years later, on 12 June 2006, the two parties met at the Greentree Estate in Manhasset, New York, where they concluded the “Green Tree Agreement’ and the handing over ceremony to be done in front of UN officials and diplomats from numerous countries. Nigeria was given 60 days to quit its occupation forces off the area.¹⁸⁴

The handing over ceremony was held in the capital of the northern Bakassi, the fish in town of Archibong, witnessed by the African Union, the British, French, German UN and UN officials, as well as the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, General Martin-Luther Agwai, and the heads of the army, navy, air force and police. When the Nigerian flag was lowered and that Cameroon rose and documents were signed by Nigerian Justice Minister Bayo Ojo and his Cameroon counterpart, Maurice Kamto, it signified the transfer of authority over the dispute Bakassi Peninsula. The final handing over ceremony took place in Calabar in Nigeria in 2008, laying to rest the long standing conflict.¹⁸⁵

Conclusion

Like between many other African states, the inherited colonial boundary was the brain behind the strained Cameroon-Nigeria

¹⁸³Tazifor, Cameroon History, p. 268.

¹⁸⁴UN News Service, “Nigeria-Cameroon accord expected after Annan brokers talks on border <http://www.un.org/apps/news/printnews.asp?nid=18820>.

¹⁸⁵“Nigeria hands over Bakassi Peninsular to Cameroon,” <http://news.bbc.uk/2/1/afrika/7SS989S.stm>.

relation. Their dispute over their 1,600 kilometre land boundary, extending from Lake Chad Basin to the Bakassi peninsula and as far as the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Guinea was founded upon the natural affluence of the area and Anglo German colonial politics of 1913. The conflict stemmed from prolonged differences for close 33 years; commencing with a low profiled incident in the mid-1960s to more intent confrontations in the 1990 decade. However, the involvement of different actors and negotiations helped to bring the conflict to an end. This chapter traced the origin and evolution the dispute, meanwhile emphasizing on the interventions that influenced the trends of the issue. Many paradigms on conflict settlement do exist and sometimes, their approaches to peace vary from one another. This chapter concentrated fundamentally on the collective peace school which contrary to the one-sum idea, argues in favour of the use of variant efforts and strategies as a more efficient approach to problem solving.

This concept does not limit itself to nations coming together, forming a common club or trying to resolve a dispute, but including a combination of endeavours from different individual and groups at different instances to help check a common situation, commencing with conflict parties. With this, different measures are employed at different intervals with various degrees of success chained up. This was the “medicine” for the conflict over the Bakassi peninsula. When the belligerents’ peace initiatives were running out of value, the O.A.U. introduced into the issue new steam. It was upon these initiatives that the UN and the ICJ based most of their interventions, which laid to rest the long unpleasant Cameroon-Nigeria bordered relations. Nonetheless, it is important to note that there are inevitable conditions of fluidity at most of the African boundary zones. Evident enough is the truism that several boundary disputes broken out between African states grew out of colonial legacy (Chad-Libya, Namibia-Botswana, Burkina Faso-Mali, Western Sahara-Algeria-Morocco, Gabon-Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia-Eritrea and so on), and the best guide to their settlement is the application of collective peace strategy. The resolution of the land and maritime border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria provides hope that balanced solutions may be found

further African boundary issues born of colonialism. Such issues can be tackled rationally resolved peacefully with combined local and international efforts. It is, therefore, hoped that African states and the African Union as a whole would invest keen interest in the workability of this approach in tackling African disputes.

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The Demise of European Colonialism and the Emergence of Boundary Conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon

By

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Abstract

The Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon provide an excellent opportunity to examine the demise of European colonialism and resurgence of rampant boundary conflicts in Africa. indigenous people of the region have never accepted the existence of the colonial boundaries despite the fact that resolution AGH/16.1 of 21 July 1964 of the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was replaced by the African Union (AU), with the same conviction, obliged all the Member States to respect the boundaries existing at the time of their independence. In fact, the postcolonial period ushered in an unprecedented wave of violent boundary conflicts between ethnic groups on a scale that had never been witnessed before. But it became clear that the emergence of boundary conflicts in the region have their roots in European colonialism. Irrespective of the efforts of the German and British colonial administrations geared at preventing and resolving these conflicts before their departure, the conflicts have persisted because postcolonial administrators and institutions in Cameroon have failed to address them. Is European colonialism the major source of boundary conflicts in the region? Or are postcolonial boundaries and land laws responsible? This chapter answers these questions and examines how European colonialism and other factors continue to underlie most boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands. Specific case studies of boundary conflicts between ethnic groups and how these conflicts have been prevented or are likely to be

resolved give this chapter its uniqueness.

Key words: European, colonialism, boundary, land, conflicts, conflict resolution.

Résumé

La région de Bamenda au Cameroun fournit une excellente occasion d'examiner les conséquences de la fin de la colonisation européenne sur la résurgence des conflits frontaliers en Afrique. Les peuples indigènes de cette région n'ont jamais accepté l'existence des frontières coloniales, malgré le fait que la résolution du 21 juillet 1964 - de l'ancienne Organisation de l'unité Africaine (OUA) qui a été remplacé par l'Union Africaine(UA) obligeait tous les Etats membres à respecter les frontières existantes au moment de leur indépendance. En fait, la période postcoloniale est le théâtre d'un vaste ensemble de conflits frontaliers sans précédent entre les groupes ethniques. Mais il est devenu évident que la colonisation européenne est la cause principale de l'émergence des conflits frontaliers dans la région. Malgré les efforts des administrations allemande et anglaise de les éviter et de les résoudre avant leur départ définitif, ces conflits ont persisté en raison de la défaillance des administrations et institutions post coloniales installées au Cameroun. Mais, la colonisation est-elle la cause majeure des conflits frontaliers? Les frontières post coloniales et les lois foncières n'ont-elles pas une certaine responsabilité? Cet essai répond à ces questions et examine comment la colonisation européenne et les autres facteurs continuent à être le fondement de la plupart des conflits frontaliers dans la zone de Bamenda. Les études de cas spécifiques des conflits frontaliers entre les groupes ethniques et comment ces conflits ont été évités ou sont susceptibles d'être résolus donne à cet article son caractère unique.

Mots clés: Européenne, colonialisme, frontaliers, des terres, conflits, résolution des conflits

Introduction

The African continent remains besieged by many boundary conflicts¹⁸⁶. Before independence, the Bamenda Grasslands¹⁸⁷ which was formerly administered by the Germans and the British, comprised many independent indigenous polities varying in size and administrative system, with boundaries rooted in ethnic and social contacts.¹⁸⁸ Between 1889 and early 1914, the Germans' colonized and more or less effectively negotiated and established the groundwork for Kamerun's international and inter-ethnic boundaries.¹⁸⁹ Soon after the outbreak of the First World War, France and Britain jointly attacked Kamerun on 27 September 1914 and from January 1916 when the Germans were defeated and ousted from Kamerun¹⁹⁰, General Dobell proclaim the division of the territory into British and French spheres on 17 March 1916¹⁹¹. Here, Emmanuel M. Mbah rekindles our minds on the fact that "Some land/boundary disputes were introduced during the process of demarcating the international boundary between French

¹⁸⁶Boyd J. Barron and College Le Moyne, "African Boundary Conflict: An Empirical Study," *African Study Review*, Vol. 22, No.3, December 1979, pp.114.

¹⁸⁷The Bamenda Grasslands for the past several years has also been referred to as "Bamenda Grassfields," "Western Grassfields," "Western High Plateau," "North West Province," and presently "North West Region."

¹⁸⁸Bongfen Chem-Langhee, "The Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon, 1959-1972," *Annals of the Faculty of Arts Letters and Social Sciences*, Vol. VI, Nos. 1 and 2, January - July 1990, pp. 3 -22

¹⁸⁹Verkijika G. Fanson, "Traditional and Colonial African Boundaries: Concept and Functions in Inter-Group Relations," *Presence Africaine*, Vol. 139, No.3, 1986, pp.58 - 75.

¹⁹⁰ "Anglophone and Francophone Nationalisms in Cameroon," *The Round Table*, Vol. 350, 1999, pp. 281-296

¹⁹¹ *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges: The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*, Vol. 2 London and Oxford, Macmillan Education LTD, 1989, p.52.

and British spheres in Cameroon from 1916 to 1922¹⁹².

After the demarcation ended in 1922, British and French spheres emerged as League Nations mandates and after the Second World War, they were transformed into United Nation Trust Territories. Verkijika G. Fanzo argues that the tiny and geographically disjoint Anglophone Cameroon was treated by the British for administrative purposes as an integral part of British Nigeria. The Northern strip of the Anglophone territory was subdivided and fused with the administrations of three separate provinces of Northern Nigeria, while the Southern part became one of the administrative provinces of Southern, later Eastern Nigeria¹⁹³. However, with the departure of the Germans, the British colonialists continued to demarcate ethnic boundaries. But the lines of demarcating spheres of interests were often haphazard and precipitate managed¹⁹⁴ to the extent that the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon experienced the emergence of rampant boundary conflicts after independence and reunification on 1 October 1961.¹⁹⁵ However, this date marked the end of British colonialism and ushered in new avenue for boundary conflicts, which to a greater extent, have not been addressed by postcolonial administrations in Cameroon.

This chapter, therefore, presents the results of an investigation of the following questions: What factors were responsible for the demise of European colonialism? Was it the administrative dynamics of German and later British colonial rule that conspired to create heightened boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands? What caused the

¹⁹²Emmanuel M. Mbah, "Disruptive Colonial Boundaries and Attempts to Resolve Land/Boundary Disputes in the Grasslands of Bamenda, Cameroon," *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 9, No.3, 2009, pp. 1-22.

¹⁹³Fanzo, "Anglophone and Francophone," p. 282.

¹⁹⁴A.T. Aghemelo and S. Ibhabehor, "Colonialism as a Source of Boundary Dispute and Conflict among African States: The World Court Judgment on the Bakassi Peninsula and its Implications for Nigeria," *Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 13, No.3, 2006, pp.177 -181.

¹⁹⁵Victor J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe, Presbyterian Printing Press, 2002, p. 233.

emergence rampant boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands after independence? Were the Germans, the British and postcolonial boundaries and land laws responsible? What attempts have been made by policymakers, elites, chiefs, civil society and non-governmental organizations toward boundary conflict resolution? In answering these questions, the author seeks to restore peace and justice in the study region, which to another extent is under European recolonization with the coming of the British and French in the form of Commonwealth and Francophonie respectively.¹⁹⁶

Definition and Concepts

A lot of scholarly works have been published on European colonialism and boundary conflicts in Africa. But as regards the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon, nothing much has been done probably because of failed attempts to perfectly define and conceptualize certain terms and concepts directly related to this study. The *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*¹⁹⁷ uses the term colonialism to “describe the process of European settlement and political control over the world, including America, Australia and parts of Africa and Asia.” It discusses the distinction between colonialism and imperialism and states that “given the difficulty of consistently distinguishing between the two terms ... use colonialism as a broad concept that refers to the project of European political domination from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries that ended with the national liberation movements of the 1960s.”¹⁹⁸ This study, therefore, treats European colonialism with emphasis strictly limited to German and British colonial rule in the Bamenda Grasslands.

Scholars have recently attempted to identify the conceptual differences and similarities among the terms boundary, frontier and

¹⁹⁶Emmanuel Y. Sobseh, *Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace in Africa: Concepts, Skills and Strategies for Institutions*, Unpublished, Cameroon, 2010, p.1.

¹⁹⁷European Colonialism, “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, online at <http://www.museumstuff.com>. Thursday 4 November 2010.

¹⁹⁸Ibid. p.1.

border. Malcolm Anderson¹⁹⁹ employs the term “frontier” to denote an international boundary and “boundary” to distinguish divisions at the sub-state level. However, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion in this study, I have decided to *concentrate* on boundary and where necessary substitute it with land. Land which according to modern economists is broadly defined as all that nature provides like land resources, minerals, forests products and water, where boundaries are usually traced.²⁰⁰

Besides, Korkor²⁰¹ divides boundaries into “general” and “fixed” boundaries, while Krukoski categorizes boundaries into natural and artificial boundaries. According to Korkor, for instance, the exact line of general boundary is left undetermined, whereas fixed boundary is the one that is accurately surveyed and guaranteed. Krukoski²⁰² on his part argues that natural boundaries involve hydric boundaries, water courses, dry boundaries and mountain ranges, while artificial boundaries are boundaries marked by monuments or boundary marks that are put over the boundary.²⁰³ To Smith,²⁰⁴ there are two types of borders: bona fide borders, and flat borders. The former are physical boundaries such as river banks and coastlines existing in the absence of delineating activities, while the later are the creations of humans involving human decisions. Despite the aforementioned similarities

¹⁹⁹Malcolm Anderson, *Frontiers: Territory and State Formation in the Modern World*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996, online at <http://www.issj.org.pk/journal/2004-tils/no-2/article/7a.htm>. Sunday 7 November 2010.

²⁰⁰Ronald H. Coase, “The Problems of Social Cost,” *The Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol.1.3, 1999, pp. 1-44.

²⁰¹Francis O. Korkor, “The Surveyor and the Boundary: A Spatial Odyssey,” Paper Presented at the 42nd Australian Surveyors Congress, 2001, p.2.

²⁰²Wilson R.M. Krukoski, “Frontiers and Boundaries,” online at <http://www.info.incc.br/wrmkkklartigoi.html>. 15 June 2008.

²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴Barry Smith, “On Drawing Lines on a Map” in A.U. Frank, W. Kuhn and D.M. Mark (eds.), *Spatial Information Theory: Proceedings of COSIT 1995*, Berlin/Heidelberg/Vienna/New York/London and Tokyo, Springer Verlag, 5, pp. 475 - 484.

and differences among these terms, One thing comes out very clear: the notion and function of the term “boundary” differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. Verkijika G. Fanson holds that:

... in traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom the particular state or polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it. In this sense, the boundary was the zone where two states were united or joined together.²⁰⁵

As already mentioned, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. But, European states, however, conceived boundaries as lines or points of separation. A major example of the manner in which boundaries were made by the Germans and British is provided by a former Commissioner and Consul-General in 1914, when he played an active part in drawing the boundary between Nigeria and what is today Western Cameroon. He had this to say in a speech to the Royal European Society:

In those days we just took a blue pencil and a ruler, and we put it down at old Calabar and that blue line to Yola ... I recollect thinking when I was sitting before an audience with the Emir (or Yola), surrounded by this tribe, that it was a very good thing that he did not know that I, with a blue pencil, had drawn a line through his territory.²⁰⁶

In the Bamenda Grasslands, the inhabitants thought the new European boundaries were only important to the Germans and the

²⁰⁵Fanson, “Traditional and Colonial,” p.71.

²⁰⁶Aghemelo and Ibhaebhor, “Colonialism,” p. 179. For more information, see K. Kirkwood and Anthony Kirk-Greene, “The Boundaries of Kamerun and Cameroon,” in Edwin Ardener (ed.), *Kingdom on Mount Cameroon Studies in the History of the Cameroon Coast 1500 - 1970*, Oxford, Berghahn Books, n.d, pp. 266 - 275.

British until they were chunked at crossing-points. V.G.Fanso highlights that “It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers.” This ailment was observed throughout Africa to the extent that resolution AGH/16.1 of 21 July 1964 of the former OAU, with the same conviction, obliged all the Member States to respect the boundaries existing at the time of their independence. In fact, the non-respect of this resolution by postcolonial administrations and indigenous people has created conflicts, which to Christopher E. Miller, is “a social fact in which at least two parties are involved and whose origins are different either in interest or in the social position of the parties.”²⁰⁷

Boundary Issues Precipitating the Collapse of European Colonization

Several factors precipitated the demise of European colonialism in the Bamenda Grasslands during the German and British colonial rules. By disrupting pre-colonial political systems that worked for Africans and imposing alien models, European colonialism regrettably laid the seeds of boundary conflicts. However, the complex nature of boundary issues that triggered the collapse of the German and later, the British rule, differed during their respective colonial periods.

The first factor that worked against German rule was the fact that German boundary policies were discriminatory. Chilver and Kaberry observe that German administrative policy in the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon was designed to bolster favoured ethnic groups that collaborated with German colonial exploitation, while those that did not were subjugated and placed under the suzerainty of friendlier ones as vassals.²⁰⁸ A treaty of protection signed on 23 august 1891 between

²⁰⁷Christopher E. Miller, *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies*, Second Edition, Geneva University for Peace, 2005, p.2.

²⁰⁸For more information, see E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda: The Precolonial History and geography of the Bamenda Grassfields*, Buea, Government Printer, 1968

Dr. Eugen Zingraft, representing the German government, and Chief Galega I, representing the people of Bali-Nyonga, offered an opportunity for German Colonial authorities to combine forces with Bali-Nyonga in subjugating and exploiting ethnic groups in the region²⁰⁹, while Galega I, in exchange for surrendering his powers, controlled all the ethnic groups. Various attempts by Bali-Nyonga to implement the provision of the treaty became the major source of boundary conflicts following the demarcation of arbitrary boundaries against the wishes of surrounding Widikum ethnic villages in particular²¹⁰. The two village groups most affected by this were Ngyen-Mbo and Ngyen-Muwa. These boundary conflicts between Bali-Nyonga and the Germans, against neighbouring Widikum ethnic groups and others have persisted to this day. These boundary conflicts against the Germans weakened the German forces and by 1914, some rival groups supported the Anglo-French forces, thus, precipitating the collapse of German colonial administration.

The second factor originated from the fact that German land laws were imperialistic and harshly implemented. From the onset, the indigenous people naively thought that German land laws were important only to the Germans, until they started agitating after they noticed that their lands and kins divided by the German boundaries were now foreign²¹¹. The German land decree of 15 June 1896 given the cumbersome title of the “All-Highest Decree concerning the creation, occupation and disposal of Crown Land and the acquisition and disposal and landed property in the Protectorate of Kamerun,” was intended to regularize the previously haphazard land tenure system.²¹² As from 1902, Land Commissions were appointed to determine indigenous land needs and to set up boundaries between lands owned by the indigenous population.²¹³ This enabled the

²⁰⁹E. M. Chilver, *Zingraff's Exploration in Bamenda, Adamawa and Benue Lands 1889-1892*, Buea, Government Printers, 1966, pp.30-31.

²¹⁰Mbah, “Disruptive Colonial Boundaries,” p.13.

²¹¹Fanso, “Traditional and Colonial,” p.106.

²¹²*Ibid.*

²¹³Ngo, *History of Cameroon*, p. 104.

Germans to claim all unoccupied land which aroused the anger of the indigenous groups in the study area. The British and the French exploited these conflictual relations to win the support of Cameroonians so as to jointly put an end to German colonialism in Cameroon.

The last factors that dismantled German colonial rule were the First World War and the Anglo-French partition of Cameroon in March 1916.²¹⁴ In fact, the provisional partition of Cameroon, according to the Picot Line in February 1916 signalled the end of German rule. The British portion was styled British Cameroons while the French segment was called French Cameroon. Emmanuel M. Mbah states that some boundary conflicts were introduced during the process of demarcating the international boundary between French and British spheres in Cameroon from 1916 to 1922²¹⁵. V.G. Fanzo adds that village groups inhabiting the frontiers were asked to decide on what side of the boundary they preferred to belong. To him, many were unaware of that choice and some did not take the offer seriously, believing that the international boundary was a white man's boundary and would have no effect on them²¹⁶. This was the source of the many land disputes between Bafanji and Bali-Gasho after the international boundary had split the latter into two. Bali-Gasho was given the option of relocating to Bagham territory on the French side, or to Bafanji on the British side. Bali-Gasho finally chose to relocate to Bafanji on the British side. The Bafanji equally abandoned their original site and relocated to territory east of River Mombe-Tanqwa²¹⁷. This international boundary is responsible for the many land conflicts between Bafanji and Bali-Gasho since it was effected.

The reasons for the erosion of German Colonialism were slightly

²¹⁴Fanzo, *Cameroon History*, p. 56; Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, p.126.

²¹⁵Mbah, "Disruptive Colonial Boundaries," p.21

²¹⁶"Verkijika G. Fanzo, "Trans-Frontier Relations and Resistance to Cameroon-Nigeria Colonial Boundaries 1916 - 1945," Doctorat D'Etat Thesis in History, University of Yaounde, 1982, pp. 31-33.

²¹⁷See File No. 22411 of Ib (1) 1948, Land Dispute between Bafanji and Bali-Gasho, 1948, National Archives Buea.

different from those of the British. The first factor was directly connected with British land laws which were not different from the unpopular German land laws. Even before, “the British and French were criticized for drawing up boundaries which separated tribes and relatives.”²¹⁸ British land/boundary policy was influenced more by the Land Registration Ordinance passed in 1924, which became operational in Nigeria and the Cameroons on 1 January 1925, and the Land and Native Rights Ordinance which was applied to Cameroon with effect on 27 February 1927²¹⁹. In an attempt to implement these land laws, the British faced oppositions from the indigenes that precipitated the end of British colonial rule in the region.

The second factor, directly linked to the first, was directly related to boundary conflicts was the taxation policies of the British. The British colonial authorities were squeamish when proceeds from taxation were inaccurate and did not hesitate punishing whole communities for tax default in the Bamenda Grasslands²²⁰. An attempt to punish the village head of Babadji for failing to account for tax money was, for example, responsible for a boundary conflict that ensued in 1930 between Babadji and Okoremanjang in the Wum area²²¹. In a bid to delineate, the land, the District Officer for Mezam “purposefully left part of Babadji territory on the Okoremanjang side of the demarcated boundary, thereby creating a land boundary dispute where none existed before.”²²² The Inter-Tribal Boundaries Settlement Ordinance (ITBSO) introduced by the British in 1933 could not resolve these problems, to the extent that some nationalists exploited the situation after the Second World War to form trade unions and political parties and to ultimately eliminate the British from their

²¹⁸Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, p. 186.

²¹⁹Emmanuel Y. Sobseh, “Land Tenure and Land Conflicts in the North West Region of Cameroon 1974 - 2007: A Historical Perspective,” *Undefended PhD Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1*, 2010, pp. 297-298.

²²⁰Fanso, *Cameroon History*, pp. 84-85.

²²¹File No. 1130 Qflf (1) 1950, Mukuru-Nkoromanjang Land Dispute: Boundary Dispute, Babadji Village versus Okoremanjang, 1950, National Archives Buca.

²²²*Ibid.*, p.10

territory.

The Emergence of Boundary Conflicts after 1961

On 1 October 1961, the Southern Cameroons achieved independence and reunified with French Cameroon to form the two federated states of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, with the Southern Cameroons becoming West Cameroon and French Cameroon becoming East Cameroon²²³ until 20 May 1972²²⁴ when the two states united to form the United Republic of Cameroon. The question is: what caused the emergence of rampant boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands after independence?

First, the disruptive boundary demarcations started by the Germans and later inherited by the British were responsible for the rampant boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grassland after independence. Kofi Annan observed this when he stated that “in the 1960s the newly independent African States inherited those colonial boundaries, together with the challenge that legacy posed to their territorial integrity²²⁵. Case studies of these troublesome boundaries created by the colonial masters which have persisted till date include the conflict between Bali-Nyonga and Guzang that stemmed from a 1928 boundary demarcated by the British administrator, J.S. Smith, Assistant District Officer (ADO)²²⁶, and the conflict between Mankon and Nsongwa that began in 1927 when British authorities demarcated

²²³Ibid. P. 282.

²²⁴On 20 May 1972, the two federated states -West and East Cameroons- were abolished by a Referendum. West Cameroon was divided into two Provinces. The former Bamenda Grasslands became known as the North West Province of Cameroon. Also, Cameroon's ten provinces ceased from being called provinces as the Presidential Decree of 12 November 2008 created the ten regions of Cameroon.

²²⁵See Kofi Annan, “The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, 1998,” full Report Available online at <http://www.un.org> . 14 May 2010. This celebrity report also stresses the indivisibility of peace in Africa and global security.

²²⁶File No. 9570 Qflb (I) 1943, Bali-Guzang (Babujang) Boundary, Bamenda Division, Cameroons Province, National Archives Buea.

a boundary between them to resolve another dispute that was created by the Germans.²²⁷

Second, land sale is also responsible for the emergence of land/boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands. The rich are buying land with increasing frequency and then registering it with slight changes in their favour, thus dispossessing more people. There are mainly new businessmen, buying large tracts of land in rural areas and sometimes transferring the small farmers into agricultural labourers on their own land.²²⁸

Third, increasing resource scarcity caused by population growth in the Bamenda Grasslands since independence has been partly responsible for the numerous boundary conflicts. The region has a surface area of 17,302 square kilometres and a population of ninety-one person per square kilometres.²²⁹ Following the 1987 census, the region had a population of over 1.2 million inhabitants²³⁰. In 2000, the total population was estimated at 1,790,164 inhabitants²³¹. Finally, the 2005 population census results proclaimed by Prime Minister, Philemon Yang on Wednesday 14 April 2010 gave the total population of Cameroon at 19,406,100 people and that of the North West Region estimated at 1,804,695 inhabitants, with Bamenda having 269,530 inhabitants²³². The persistence increase in population, without a correspondent increase in resources in the region has created new arenas of boundary conflicts.

Fourth, Cameroonian land/boundary laws, ordinances and decrees have also contributed to spur boundary conflicts in the area. In

²²⁷Fanso, "Trans-Frontier Relations," p.41.

²²⁸Sobseh, "Land Tenure and Land Conflict," P.156.

²²⁹Ministry of Information and Culture, The North West Province, Yaoundé, Ministry of Information and Culture, 2001, p.63.

²³⁰Ibid

²³¹Fogwe Zephania Nhi, Macmillan School Atlas of Cameroon, Cameroon, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005, p.25.

²³²Yussuf Sariki, "Release of Population Census Results: Enactment of ELECAM Amendments and Referendum Procedure," CHRONICLE, No.210, 19-25 April 2010, p.2.

considering the colonial effects of the British land/boundary laws, we see the first to be the drastic Change from collective to individual ownership of land. Even though this change was more noticeable among the coastal people of Douala, primarily Limbe, Kumba and Nkongsamba, than those of Bamenda, Bamilike and Garoua, it provoked new waves of boundary conflicts especially with the passing of the 1974 land ordinances by President Amadou Ahidjo²³³. For President Ahidjo to have introduced ordinances No. 74-1²³⁴, 74-2²³⁵, and 74-3²³⁶ of 6 July 1974, which by Cameroon law have stripped the customary legal system of any part to play in the legal control and administration of land there must be a possible range of possible intentions as to what the effects of his action would be. These new innovations, coupled with the fact that before 1974, registered lands or those with certificates were found only in the former East Cameroon, sparked up land/boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands where the indigenes hated the complex nature of obtaining land certificates or demarcating boundaries.

Fifth, most of the boundary conflicts emerged after independence due to the corrupt and illicit practices of government officials and traditional rulers. It is necessary to identify many recent dishonoured and harsh sanctions that some societies have taken against their recalcitrant chiefs in the Bamenda Grasslands. For example, in 2006,

²³³The President of the United Republic of Cameroon was authorized by the Constitution of 2 June 1972 and by Law No.73-3 of 9 July 1973 to establish by Ordinances rules governing land tenure and government owned land and properties.

²³⁴Ordinance No. 74-1 provides that the State shall be the guardian of all lands with an intervening capacity, that only five categories qualify individual rights over land as private property, land registration being the principal category. The transmission period is five years.

²³⁵Ordinance No 74-2 provides that public property shall comprise all personal and real property which, by nature or intended purpose is set apart either for the direct use of the public or for public service.

²³⁶Ordinance No 74-3 provides that any existing titles over any land facing expropriation for public purpose shall be extinguished and the land thus declared free shall be registered in the name of the State.

the embittered population of Big Babanki (Kedjem Keko) burnt their Fon to death over allegations of expropriation and appropriation of community lands and other malpractices²³⁷. On 8 October the same year another tragic action which neither followed a process recognized by tradition nor the administration occurred in Bali-Kumbat whereby a radical fraction of the king makers led by Doh Tangsin attempted to dethrone the incumbent Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin III²³⁸. In 2010, the Fon of Bamali was also accused of several malpractices against the villagers and was equally removed and replaced.²³⁹

Case Studies of Boundary Conflicts in Postcolonial Bamenda Grasslands

These case studies effectively elaborate the close connection between postcolonial reforms and boundary conflicts in the North West Region (NWR) of Cameroon. They reflect efforts made by ethnic groups, civil society, and non-governmental organizations, government and individuals to confront, manage and resolve boundary conflicts. We are going to focus briefly on two case studies: Bali Nyonga versus Bawock and Mbessa versus Oku.

Bali Nyonga Versus Bawock

Bali Nyonga and Bawock are found in Bali Nyonga Sub-Division

²³⁷John Mope Simo, "Challenges to Chieftaincy Today: Governance Issues and how Pons Strategise to Overcome the Obstacles of Overarching Structures in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon," *Les Mutations en Afrique. Colloque International de Yaoundé*, 23 - 25 Janvier 2008, Yaoundé, presse de l'université Catholique d'Afrique Central, 2009, pp. 159-193.

²³⁸Ibid.

²³⁹It must be pointed out that under no circumstances should "jungle justice" - the use of brute force unconstitutional methods - be allowed in any civilized society. It is clear that for these events mentioned, the 1997 decree on the management of chieftaincy does not permit that when a traditional leader is involved in a criminal act he should be forcefully eliminated or dethroned or force to abdicate.

in the North West Region (NWR) of Cameroon. The land/boundary conflict between these ethnic groups sparked up a lot of speculations after it erupted and took a dramatic turn on 6 March 2007²⁴⁰. There is one question that must be answered for the proper understanding of this land/boundary conflict. Is Bawock a quarter in Bali Nyonga or is it a village on its own? During an interview in *The Post* on 24 March 2007 the Fon of Bali Nyonga, Doh Gah Nyonga III, submits:

Bawock is right inside Bali. If you want to go to Mbu, Baforchu, you have to pass through a Bali Nyonga village. So there is no way we can make a boundary for Bawock including Mantum. This is why an attempt on 6 December 2009 to create a fictitious illegal boundary was done behind my back. We went to the administration to let them know that such an exercise was out of place. It did not help. That is why we have decided to take the matter to court. We know Bawock people have a lot of money. But if there is any justice, we expect justice²⁴¹.

Before this interview was granted, the Fons of Baforchu and Pinyin with the Fon of Bawock, Theodore Wanda Nana, met at the Pinyin Fon's palace and addressed a letter on 14 November 2006 to the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam, Jules Marcelin Ndjaga. These Fons requested the administration to assist them by providing appropriate technicians and experts to demarcate their boundaries. The administration responded by programming the exercise on Wednesday 6 December 2006 in the morning through a letter with reference No.00/UE29/PS/A1²⁴². This move already signalled danger especially as the Bali Nyonga interpreted it as an attempt to expand Bawock village. At this juncture, conflict analysts could foresee another border

²⁴⁰Valentine Yong Nke, "Inter-Tribal Violence in the North West Province of Cameroon: Who is Responsible?" BOFTON Human Rights Watch, Vol. 1, No.1, Cameroon, May 2007, p.6.

²⁴¹Perkins Manyong, "Interview with Bali Fon: We have Sued Bawock for Maltreating Us," *The Post*, No. 0861, Monday 28 May 2007, p. 5

²⁴²Sobseh, "Land Tenure and Land Conflicts," p. 389

conflict. The *BOTFON Human Rights Watch* visualizes this danger when it states:

Despite efforts by high level Bali Nyonga traditional authorities headed by the Fon to meet the Governor and his concerned collaborators, the Mezam administration moved to the field with uncharacteristic promptitude, barely three weeks after the Fons addressed their memo. Given that the villages of Mantum, Gola, Kumbela, Kumcha, Mbelu, Jangman and Kopin are found between Bawock on the one hand and Mbu and Pinyin on the others, the Bali people interpreted the administration's move as a deliberate and insidious move to carve out portions of Bali land to expand Bawock village without as much as consulting the Bali villagers in the buffer zone²⁴³.

The conflict that started on 6 March 2007 was immediately provoked by the annual ritual performed by the Bali Nyonga people through the Bali *Juju* known as Voma²⁴⁴. The Fon of Bali Nyonga, Doh Gah Nyonga recalls that "... one Peter Limen and his sons ... attacked the Voma and took its equipment and even had the guts to say they should go and tell the Fon of Bali to come and collect the Voma²⁴⁵. In addition to the fact that the traditional house at the entrance of Bali Nyonga Fon's palace called Banchu, constructed in 1889 by Dr. Eugene Zintgraff was burnt to ashes by unidentified arsonists²⁴⁶, the Bali Nyonga people still think "Bawock is a quarter in Bali²⁴⁷. Despite some of these causes, the consequences were far-reaching on the indigenous people and the NWR of Cameroon. *The Post* highlights some of the devastating effects of the boundary conflict:

²⁴³Manyong, "Interview with Bali Fon," pp. 7-8

²⁴⁴Ernest Sumelong, "SDO Says Bali People Burnt Houses," *The Post*, No. 0842, Friday 9 March 2007, p. 2

²⁴⁵Ibid

²⁴⁶Richard Nde Lajong, "North West Burns Again," *Eden*, Wednesday 7- Monday 12 March 2007, p. 2.

²⁴⁷Manyong, "Interview with Bali Fon," pp. 7-8.

Limen who was severely beaten and his car smashed, was hospitalized in the Bamenda Provincial Hospital. A provision store estimated at 10 million Francs CFA belonging to one Christopher Nono was burnt to ashes. Some 350.000 Francs CFA and two motorcycles were burnt. Another trader, Francis Bianda, was dragged out of his car and beaten, before his car was set ablaze. Jacob Yimi lost 150 bags of Robusta coffee in the flames. The Headmaster of Government School Bawock, Philip Ngaso, was helpless as flames engulfed a two apartment building. The pillars and billboards meant to demarcate the land including two vehicles were all smashed. Many people were displaced while others lost lives and properties²⁴⁸.

Mbessa Versus Oku

In 2007, boundary conflicts erupted between the Mbessa people in Belo Sub-Division in Boyo Division and Oku people of Oku Sub-Division in Bui Division in the NWR of Cameroon. The first incident that left more than 1500 people homeless and over 350 houses burnt occurred on 21 February 2007²⁴⁹. The second escalated on 4 May 2007 barely about three months after their last clash²⁵⁰. These unfortunate events sparked up a lot of speculations in the region. But, before 2007, boundary conflicts had occurred between the two villages. According to Richard Nde and Teche Nyamusa:

The conflict between the two villages started since 1942 when two quarters belonging to Mbessa were cut off and included in the map of Oku by colonial masters. Mbessa had since resisted the

²⁴⁸Kini Nsom, "Bali Warriors Burns Fon's Palace, 50 other Houses," *The Post*, No. 0841, Monday 5 March 2007, p.2.

²⁴⁹Richard Nde and Teche Nyamusa, "OkulMbessa Fighting Resumes, 6 Dead, 18 Wounded," *Eden*, Wednesday 9 Monday 14 May 2007, p.2.

²⁵⁰Teche Nyamusa, "After OkulMbessa Round Two Crisis: Fons Blame Administrators," *Eden*, Wednesday 16 Monday 23 May 2007, p.7.

attempts and two conflicts had erupted in 1964 and 1972. The problem escalated in 1982 and 1988 when houses were burnt in Mbessa and one person was killed. The nasty incident again occurred on 12 February 2007 when Oku villagers attacked Mbessa burning down hundreds of houses and left thousands homeless.²⁵¹

These historical facts can better be elaborated upon. History holds that land conflicts between Mbessa and Oku usually occur during the farming and harvesting seasons with the major cause being the desire to acquire more land. The Jeffrey Commission that was set up in 1942 to demarcate the divisional boundary between Bui Division and Menchum Division clearly demarcated the boundaries²⁵². However, a part of Mbessa, Balichim, which has a very fertile forest uphill, was given to Bui Division under Oku. Conversely, the Oku people have gone beyond the Jeffrey demarcation and are claiming a piece of land which according to sources from Mbessa does not belong to them²⁵³. Valentine Y. Nke concludes:

This resulted in the conflict, which at first was silent, but in 1975 resulted in a real violence. Three people were killed and so much material destruction was caused. It happened again in 1982, 1988 and of recent in 2007. Although there were no human casualties this time around, the material damage was enormous, estimated at 475 million Francs CFA²⁵⁴.

Following the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, Marafa Hamidou Yaya's intervention after the 2007 Mbessa-Qku boundary conflicts, certain decisions were arrived at. In Ministerial Order NO.00012/4/ALMINATD/DOT/SDOA/ SCA of 28 August 2008, the Minister emphasized that the boundary between Mbessa and Oku should be maintained as mapped by M.D.W Jeffrey

²⁵¹Nde and Nyamusa, "OkulMbessa Fighting," p.2.

²⁵²Nke, "Inter-Tribal Violence," p.5.

²⁵³Ibid.

²⁵⁴Ibid. p.6.

in 1942. Before, the people of Mbessa had set up a Commission on 6 June 2008 to study the conflicts following the instructions of the Senior Divisional Officer for Boyo. The Commission was made up of representatives from Mbessa including the Fon of Mbessa, Gilbert Njong Kaiyusebe III.²⁵⁵ The Fon of Oku, Sintieh II, also cooperated with the administration. However, a number of people were reported to have been killed in addition to the property and crops destroyed. Despite all these, several attempts have been made toward boundary conflict resolution in the region.

Postcolonial Boundary Conflict Prevention and Resolution

The British introduced the Inter-Tribal Boundary Settlement Ordinance (ITBSO) in 1933, which combined with Native Courts and administrative procedures in the resolution of boundary disputes before 1961²⁵⁶. Despite its successes, the use of the ITBSO in resolving boundary conflicts was gradually discontinued from 1952 to the end of British Colonial rule because of disagreements between administrators and lawyers over its interpretation²⁵⁷. In 1962, the defunct West Cameroon Government established the Inter-Community Boundary Settlement Law (ICBSL) to resolve boundary conflicts²⁵⁸ until the reunification of former British and French Cameroons in 1972.

The ICBSL was replaced by the Land Consultative Boards. These Boards were quasi-judicial bodies in the administrative tribunals set up at national, provincial, divisional and sub-divisional levels to prevent and resolve land conflicts as well as register land titles in conformity with the terms of the 1974 Land Ordinances in Cameroon²⁵⁹. In Cameroon, every application for a land certificate is dealt with by the

²⁵⁵See Commission for the Settlement of Boundary Dispute, E32-02/4/21412008, 6 June 2008.

²⁵⁶See File No. 64Qf/a (1)1933 (23 December), Inter-Tribal Boundaries Settlement Ordinance, National Archives Buea.

²⁵⁷Mbah, "Disruptive Colonial Boundaries," p. 28

²⁵⁸Ibid. p. 29.

²⁵⁹Sobseh, "Land Tenure and Land Conflicts," p. 220.

Boards²⁶⁰ and ratified by the Minister of Territorial administration²⁶¹. Most of the officials are either corrupt, intervene in land conflicts without notifying others, prefer late intervention and deployment of troops or even send French speaking Cameroonians to resolve the conflict with little knowledge of the history of the various boundary conflicts.

In addition, President Amadou Ahidjo signed a decree on July 1978 to establish the terms and conditions for settling farmer-grazer boundary disputes²⁶². In the NWR of Cameroon, with the rapid population increase, there has been a constant outward colonization of previous uncultivated and grazing lands around the settled areas²⁶³. The first of such disagreements in this region were in Nso in 1938 and in Esu in 1944²⁶⁴. These conflicts have resulted in huge destruction of property, animals, crops and human lives.

Recommendations

Several actions have been taken to transform boundary conflicts. But after a critical study of the various land/boundary conflicts in the NWR, five points could be recommended for effective implementation to avoid further embarrassment and confrontations on boundary conflicts.

- The government should accept the necessity to formulate a sound long-term land and resource policy and the obligation to ensure that its new land use and management option which

²⁶⁰R. Nforti, "The Impact of the Present Land Tenure Reforms in the Former West Cameroon," *Cameroon Law Review*, Vol.2, No. 28, 1984, p. 11.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*

²⁶²See Decree No. 781263 of 3 July 1978 to Establish the Terms and Conditions for Settling Farmer/Grazier Disputes.

²⁶³These farmer-grazier land conflicts are not very frequent in the other divisions like Mezam, Momo, Donga Mantung, Bui and Ngoketunjia

²⁶⁴Venatius Kum Ngwoh, "Pamer-Graner Conflicts in Menchum Division 1943-2005: A Study of Contested Hegemony Over Land," M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Buea, 2006, p. 69.

deliberately blends the customary and modern system is implemented. The purpose of such a policy framework should be the maintenance of local and regional peace, and development in the NWR.

- The establishment of good values and the introduction of new mechanisms including incentives, checks and balances, a reliable public sector, capacity building, raising-awareness, transparency, monitoring, sanctions and codes of conduct by the government and other policymakers will reduce boundary conflicts and instil peace²⁶⁵ in the NWR.
- Increasing public participation in boundary demarcation and improving the information and database available for land use planning, such as the use of participatory community mapping or negotiated territorial development will be helpful.
- Improving the ability of mediators to identify the roots of boundary conflicts, through stakeholder analysis or conflict mapping.
- Empowering women and the poor indigenes through education, better medical care improvement in communication through newspapers, radio, telephones, and televisions will help them gain confidence and consequently participate in decision making both at home and the community level.
- Stakeholders should continue the institutional reform program, including clarifying the role of the state, and municipalities services in the management and administration of land, reinforcing their technical capacity and updating procedure as well as computerizing the information contained in the land registers as quickly as possible.

Conclusion

Conflict analysts who have studied the various boundary conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands have deep frustrations about the low level

²⁶⁵Organization of American States, "Land Tenure: Lessons for Sustainability through Information Sharing, "Poll Series, No. 10, April 2006, p. 4

of development and progress caused by violence. The general conclusion is that various boundary conflicts experienced during the German and British administrations were less as compared to those witnessed during the postcolonial period. Despite so many efforts to reform aspects of property rights, to regularize land registration of rural and urban lands, to resolve boundary conflicts, to solve refugee problems, to improve on the farming systems, to restore peace and justice through dialogue and to modernize land registration systems, a lot still remains to be done in the Bamenda Grasslands to address the needs of marginalized groups, especially women, indigenous peoples and poor rural grazers and farmers who are denied basic rights over lands and boundaries. In fact, for peace to reign in the region, the indigenous people and foreigners must desist from their obnoxious and recalcitrant behaviours and government must introduce new policies that blend approved customary and modern systems.

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Les conflits frontaliers entre les chefferies Bamiléké de l'Ouest-Cameroun

By
Albert Pascal Temgoua

Résumé

L'état de guerre s'est présent au cours de l'histoire comme un état de bouleversement des structures sociales, politiques et très souvent matérielles. Les conflits armés constituent de ce fait un cadre privilégié pour les sociétés les plus fortes d'agrandir leur territoire OU leur population. C'est ainsi que l'impact des conflits armés fut considérable sur l'évolution des frontières des chefferies bamiléké de l'Ouest-Cameroun. En dépit de l'interdiction des guerres tribales par les autorités coloniales, certaines chefferies, mues par un désir de puissance double d'une soif effrénée du pouvoir, allaient s'en servir en vue de réaliser leurs ambitions. Elles purent ainsi agrandir leurs territoires au détriment de leurs voisins. Fort heureusement, le rétablissement de la paix suivait toujours les conflits.

Mots clés: conflits, chefferies, contestation, armée, armes, résolution, paix.

Abstract

War usually appears in history as a destruction of social, political and material structures. Armed, conflicts therefore constitute a good opportunity for warlike people to enlarge their territory or their population. This has been the case of the Bamileke chiefdoms of West Cameroon where armed conflicts seriously affected the evolution of frontiers. Despite the prohibition of tribal wars by the colonial masters,

some powerful chiefdoms undertook it to realize their territorial ambitions on their neighbours. Fortunately, the restoration of peace always followed conflicts.

Key words: conflicts, chiefdoms, contestation, army, arms, resolution, peace.

Introduction

Les Bamiléké sont un peuple belliqueux dont l'installation dans le biotope aura été le fruit d'une certaine violence. De nombreux cas de guerres inter-chefferies sont signalés et se signalent davantage. Il semble en effet que l'expansionnisme se pose comme la constante qui se dégage du processus de formation des chefferies bamiléké, une fois qu'elles ont pris naissance. De sorte que cerner, la problématique de leur évolution, c'est appréhender les campagnes militaires qui auront marqué la vie de ces communautés ; c'est d'abord tenter une esquisse de leur histoire militaire. Ce n'est pas que les sociétés bamiléké se définissent comme une civilisation de guerre et de l'agression. Il s'agit bien plutôt d'une situation qui pourrait procéder de l'exiguïté de la plupart de ces entités, en raison des fortes densités liées l'aboutissement dans les hauts plateaux de diverses migrations. Sous le débordement de leurs populations, les chefferies étaient contraintes à convoiter le territoire du voisin. L'étroitesse du territoire était donc responsable de nombreux conflits frontaliers qui emmaillaient les rapports entre les chefferies. Et dans leurs aventures guerrières, les chefs se heurtaient à d'autres chefs relativement puissants avec qui la partie était inégale au niveau de l'armement et des effectifs.

On peut donc affirmer que dans les sociétés bamiléké de l'Ouest-Cameroun, les majorités conflits inter-chefferies étaient relatives aux querelles frontaliers. Les chefferies Bangou, Atcham et Bamendjou par exemple ont lutté avec presque tous leurs voisins pour sauvegarder étendre leurs frontières, A la question de savoir ce que les conflits armés leur ont apporté, les Tcham disent « beaucoup de choses », en avançant surtout l'agrandissement de leur territoire. C'est en effet au cours des affrontements armés avec leurs voisines que les frontières

ces chefferies évoluèrent plus que jamais. Elles gagnèrent assez d'espaces plus qu'elles en perdirent. Mais chaque fois que la paix était rompue, les autorités cherchaient toujours à la rétablir.

I. La Fougue Belliqueuse de Bangou

D'une superficie de 90 km², la chefferie Bangou partage ses frontières avec neuf voisins qui sont: Baham, Bandenkop, Bayangam, Bamera, Bangoua, Batchingou, Bana, Batcha, Babouantou. Son histoire militaire est impressionnante dans la mesure où elle s'est livrée à de des guerres de conquête contre sept de ses neuf voisins²⁶⁶. Au terme de ces guerres, Bangou 'est enrichie, entre 1916 et 1922, d'une parcelle de 1271 ha de superficie. A sa naissance, cette chefferie s'appelait d'ailleurs *Nieup* qui veut dire « qui bouge et bouscule tout autour de lui »²⁶⁷.

De tous ces conflits frontaliers, un a particulièrement retenu notre attention. Il s'agit du conflit Bangou-Babouantou qui, jusqu'à ce jour, n'a pas encore eu de solution définitive. Des multiples tentatives de résolution ont été entreprises aussi bien par les autorités traditionnelles que par les administrations coloniale et postcoloniale. Ce litige frontalier date de l'époque précoloniale. Le chef Djomo I de Bangou livrait de temps en temps des combats acharnés contre son homologue Ngadeu de Babouantou au sujet du petit village dénommé Bamekekep. Les attaques de Djomo L'avaient généralement lieu en journée. La tactique consistait soit en encerclement de L'ennemi par surprise, soit en- des raids dans le village adverse, suivis de pillages. Le système d'alliance était le principal moyen défensif de Babouantou. Les alliances entre Babouantou et ses « sosurs, Banka et Bandenkop étaient à intérêt réciproque, car Babouantou et Banka aideront Bandenkop à repousser la pression de Baham²⁶⁸. Malgré la résistance de Babouantou,

²⁶⁶ Exceptes Baham et Bayangam avec qui Bangou a des liens de sang.

²⁶⁷ Kepgang R., «Le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou : essai d'analyse historique des origines a nos jours », mémoires de maitrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 2005, pp.3-4.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.19-20.

une bonne partie de Bamekekep fut annexes par Djomo I. C'est à ce stade que les Allemands arrivèrent dans la région et décidèrent de mettre un terme à ces guerres. En 1913, ils firent construire une tranchée comme frontière entre les deux chefferies. Mais après leur départ du Cameroun, les guerres de conquêtes reprirent, Tayo I, successeur de Djomo I de Bangou, estimant que les Allemands avaient fixé de façon arbitraire la frontière entre les deux chefferies. C'est ainsi qu'il repoussa Babouantou sur près de quatre kilomètres. En 1922, L'administrateur français Giron fit creuser une nouvelle tranchée allant de Bana au Sud à Bandenkop au Nord, servant de ligne de démarcation. Cette tranchée a effectivement servi de limite entre Bangou et Babouantou jusqu'à sa remise en cause par Babouantou en 1980, soit près de soixante ans plus tard²⁶⁹.

Le 5 août 1980 en effet, les habitants de Babouantou, armés de fusils de chasse, de lances, de machettes, de haches et de gourdins, pénétrèrent en territoire Bangou, détruisant tout sur passage. Ils revendiquaient leurs terres ancestrales situées entre les tranchées de 1913 et 1922. Les revendications se poursuivirent les 8, 12 et 13 août et les 12 et 13 septembre 1980 par la multiplication des violents raids accompagnés de destruction des biens en territoire Bangou. C'est ainsi que de vastes plantations ont été complètement rasées, des caféiers, des sagoutiers, des bananiers, des eucalyptus et bien d'autres plantes détruites²⁷⁰. Malgré les injonctions de L'administration (sous-préfet, préfet, gouverneur) saisie par Bangou, on enregistra de nouvelles attaques les années suivantes, notamment en 1983, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1991, attaques suivies des pratiques magiques dans la zone litigieuse : des fétiches de toutes sortes, du pistache, des poulets et jujubes furent enterrés. Dans la tradition bamiléké, ces pratiques sont très dangereuses et peuvent avoir des conséquences très tragiques sur la vie des populations. Les Bangou ne restèrent pas indifférents à cela ; ils réagirent en enterrant à leur tour des écureuils et autres effets pour

²⁶⁹ Les deux chefferies ont accepté la tranchée de 1922 comme limite de leur zone d'influence, et ont vécu en bonne intelligence, nouant même des liens matrimoniaux.

²⁷⁰ Képgang R, «Le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou ... », p.32. Ces attaques ont fait de nombreux blessés qui ont été transportés à l'hôpital protestant de Bangoua.

anéantir la puissance des pratiques babouantou²⁷¹. La dernière des plus violentes attaques est celle du 18 novembre 1992, attaque au cours de laquelle Le nom me Michel Simeu de Bangou a été assassiné²⁷², et qui a poussé Le haut sommet de l'Etat à se saisir du dossier.

II. L'expansionnisme de Batcham

L'un des fondements de l'esprit guerrier des Batcham résidait dans leur désir de constituer un royaume à la taille de celui de Bamoun. Le chef Fomekong s'était en effet fait une amitié avec le souverain des Bamoun, le sultan Njoya. Il entendait ainsi partager une même frontière avec ce dernier sur le fleuve Noun. Il avait fait autant avec Foodong, le chef de Bafou. Fomekong devait pour cela trouver beaucoup de prétextes pour la réalisation de son rêve qui allait connaître un brusque arrêt avec l'arrivée des Allemands²⁷³.

Thierno Mouctar Bah a montré que dans les chefferies bamiléké, Le chef, en plus de ses pouvoirs magico-religieux, devait être un fin stratège, apte à défendre sa collectivité et éventuellement à assurer son expansion par des campagnes victorieuses contre ses voisins²⁷⁴. Sa puissance était fonction du nombre de sa population, et l'accroissement de cette dernière lui offrait l'opportunité de conquérir davantage d'espace et affirmer en conséquence sa puissance.

Le rêve d'un royaume s'étant estompé du fait de la présence allemande, Le chef Fomekong mit sur pied une politique provocatrice aux fins de satisfaire son dessein: il provoqua des crises frontalières afin de susciter la réaction de ses voisins. A défaut de réaliser un

²⁷¹ Ibid., p.36.

²⁷² Kegang R, «Le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou ... », p.30

²⁷³ Tatiodjio M., « Les conflits années dans la chefferie Batcham de 1903 à 1959 », mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, université de Yaoundé 1, 1994, p.49; S. P. Kenne Fouedong, "Traditions historiques de la chefferie Batcham (Bamboutos) des origines à 1903", Mémoire de Maitrise en Histoire, Université de Yaoundé, 1991, pp.60-62.

²⁷⁴ T.M. Bah, « guerre, pouvoir et société dans l'Afrique précoloniale (entre le lac Tchad et la cote du Cameroun) », thèse de Doctorat d'Etat ès-Lettres, Université de Paris I, 1985, p.2.

royaume en soumettant les chefferies voisines, il était désormais question de reconnaître leur souveraineté tout en grignotant leurs territoires. C'est dans cette logique que les chefferies Bansoa au Sud-Est, Bangang à l'Ouest, Bamendjio à l'Est et Babete au Nord-Est furent attaqués. Pour éviter des longueurs, nous nous contenterons du conflit Batcham-Bansoa et du conflit Batcham-Bangang.

Bansoa avait un lopin de terre très fertile au-delà de Meghume, cours d'eau sillonnant la frontière Batcham-Bansoa. Ce qui veut dire que les Bansoa devaient traverser Le cours d'eau avant d'arriver sur cette partie de leur territoire. Il leur fallait donc un pont, ce qui fut fait. Mais aussitôt dresse, il fut détruit par les Batcham. Irrités, les Bansoa construisirent un second pont qui subit le même sort. Un troisième fut construit quand les Batcham occupaient le terrain. Les Bansoa réalisèrent alors qu'il s'agissait bel et bien d'une déclaration de guerre. Les groupes *Mandjon* de Batcham usèrent de l'encerclement pour vaincre les Bansoa. Dans la nuit du 26 au 27 mars 1911, les Batcham placèrent leurs guerriers de part et d'autre du pont le Meghumé, Le lendemain, les Bansoa, aussi armes de fusils que les Batcham, traversèrent en toute quiétude. Derrière eux, les guerriers batcham détruisirent le pont. Signal fut donné et, les en face comme de dos, les Bansoa se rendirent. Quelques-uns tentèrent de s'enfuir en l'absence d'un pont, ils ne purent s'échapper²⁷⁵. La chefferie Bansoa perdit ainsi non seulement ses hommes, mais aussi une partie de son territoire. La bande de Tchueshya dont le quartier Baletsi constituait la plus grande partie fut ainsi conquise. Entre 1916 et 1919, la chefferie de Batcham acheva sa victoire sur les chefferies de Bamendjou et de Babete, en leur arrachant des terres. Les terres ainsi arrachées constituent aujourd'hui près du tiers de la superficie de la chefferie Batcham, soit environ plus de 20 km²²⁷⁶.

Pour ce qui est du conflit Batcham-Bangang, il éclata le 11 juin 1946. Il ne dura quelques jours, mais ses conséquences furent importantes. Batcham et Bangang étaient deux chefferies sœurs issues de Nzié et qui partageaient une longue frontière, Sur le plan spatial,

²⁷⁵ Tatiodjio M., « Les conflits années ... », p.52.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p.87.

ngang était un géant a cote de Batcham qui ne représentait qu'un tiers de sa superficie, soit plus de 200 km² contre 70 km². Sur le plan démographique, Bangang comptait, en 1946, 12.000 habitants contre 9.000 pour Batcham²⁷⁷. Du point de vue purement militaire, on avait une chefferie guerrière de Batcham face à une chefferie pacifique de Bangang. En effet, depuis leur séparation à Nzié, les souverains de Bangang avaient trouvé une implantation facile alors que ceux de Batcham eurent à mettre sur pied une armée dans le but de rechercher un espace vital. On peut donc dire qu'en 1946, on avait face à face une armée conquérante de Batcham et une armée défensive de Bangang. Il s'agissait donc de deux chefferies à forces pas du tout égales qui, pour un problème de frontière, entrèrent en guerre.

C'est en effet depuis 1938 que Batcham manifestait une volonté inavouée de façon guérir le pouvoir jadis perdu à Bangang et surtout de reprendre cette place forte qu'était le bois sacré de Nzié²⁷⁸. Cette année-là, un certain Jacob Tafo de Batcham traversa la rivière (Nkoka qui servait de frontière entre les deux chefferies et alla créer une plantation de caféiers en territoire bangang. Il fut suivi peu après par les nommes Nkame et Nkouete. Dès lors s'engagea un bras de fer entre les deux chefferies. En 1940, les Bangang créèrent un nouveau marché au niveau de la frontière entre les deux chefferies au détriment de celui de Baneto en territoire batcham et non loin de là. Ce nouveau marché évolua progressivement en empiétant d'avantage sur le territoire de Batcham qui vit en cela un acte d'agression²⁷⁹. En plus du marché, les femmes bangang s'étaient mises à cultiver les terres de Batcham. Le chef batcham fit construire une longue clôture truffée de fétiches pour délimiter son territoire. Mais les Bangang la détruisirent aussitôt, Ce fut la goutte d'eau qui fit déborder le vase. C'est ainsi qu'au soir du 11 juin 1946, l'armée batcham détruisit tout le nouveau marché que les Bangang avaient créé et incendia de nombreuses concessions de ces derniers. Efenzy, Le chef bangang, mobilisa aussitôt ses troupes,

²⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 59

²⁷⁸ E. Tiokam, «La diplomatie traditionnelle dans le Bamboutos: 1946-1977», mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé, 1990, p.77.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p.78.

et la bataille eut lieu au niveau de la bande allant de Takoua à Bapepa. Le 12 juin, avec cette particularité d'être entièrement en territoire bangang. Les deux belligérants disposaient d'un armement hétéroclite allant du lance-pierres au fusil en passant par les flèches, les gourdins, les frondes, les poignards, etc. Mais la superont de l'armée batcham fut nette : opérant par ordre, elle pillait et incendiait tout ce qu'il y avait d'habitations devant elle. Elle voulait ainsi effacer Bangang de la carte des chefferies bamiléké en l'annexant par tous les moyens. Bangang n'eut la vie sauve que grâce aux interventions du Chef de Subdivision de 'Dschang, M. Laruele, qui fit venir des renforts de Dschang et procéda à des arrestations, et du Chef de la Région Bamiléké, M. Geli, qui, informe, arriva aussi sur les lieux le 13 juin et imposa le cessez-le-feu²⁸⁰. Les conséquences de ce conflit furent nombreuses. Nous y reviendrons plus loin.

III. Les Conquêtes Territoriales de Bamendjou

Bamendjou est aujourd'hui une chefferie vaste de 65 km², et partage ses frontières avec huit autres chefferies qui sont : Bameka au Nord-Est, Bansoa au Nord-Ouest, Bahouan à l'Est, Baham au Sud-Est, Batié au Sud-Ouest, Fotouni, Bagam et Baloum à l'Ouest²⁸¹. Toutes ces chefferies se sont fondées au cours du XVIII^e siècle. Au XIX^e siècle, elles amorcèrent une étape importante de leur histoire: elles avalent en effet pris conscience de l'étroitesse de leurs frontières, compte tenu de la croissance considérable de leurs populations. A Bamendjou, après le déplacement du palais de Nkwon'neku à Trota, le territoire était désormais exigü pour les habitants à cause justement de la démographie qui allait grandissante²⁸². Il fallait donc étendre ses frontières afin de trouver l'espace vital pour tous. C'est ainsi que

²⁸⁰ M. Tatiodjio M, « Les conflits armes ... », pp.63-64.

²⁸¹ E. Ghomsi, « Les Bamiléké du Cameroun. Essai d'étude historique des origines à 1920 », thèse de doctorat de 3^{ème} cycle en histoire, université de Paris Panthéon Sorbonne, 1972, p.13.

²⁸² M.C. Mawa « Bamendjou et les chefferies attenantes : un cas d'étude des relations inter-chefferies, des origines à 1905 », mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé, 2006, p.49.

Bamendjou s'acharna sur ses voisins à travers les annexions territoriales qui débouchèrent sur des conflits.

Thierno Mouctar Bah a démontré que la récurrence de guerres en pays bamiléké était liée au déséquilibre toujours plus grand entre le quantum de population et la surface de terre des populations²⁸³. Dans une étude intéressante sur la chefferie traditionnelle, Jean Claude Barbier va dans le même sens lorsqu'il affirme: « La puissance d'un chef se mesure au nombre de ses administrés qu'il a pu installer sur son territoire. Volume démographique et superficie évoluent de pair et la pression démographique pousse à la convoitise des territoires voisins »²⁸⁴. Il est donc clair que l'explosion démographique devait aboutir aux annexions et expansions territoriales. Bamendjou a ainsi annexe les portions de territoire des populations, notamment celles des Batié qui étaient installées à Kang, celles des Baham et des Bahouan à Medja, les Bangam à La'tsit et Choum, les Fotouni à Choum²⁸⁵. Les différents conflits se déroulaient généralement dans la journée. La déclaration de guerre était constatée lorsqu'une épée était plantée dans un arbre sur la place du marché par Le *Mandjon*, société guerrière en pays bamiléké²⁸⁶. L'appel aux armes se faisait par la sonnerie de la trompe. Tous les hommes valides et aptes au combat répondaient à l'appel, et on désignait ceux qui devaient effectivement aller au front. Tout homme était apriori susceptible d'aller au front selon ses capacités physiques et mentales.

Les Bamendjou qui s'étaient fixés comme objectif faire de leur village « un territoire sans frontière » avaient mis sur pied une armée bien organisée. Des camps d'entraînement comme celui de Nkwo'nkeu étaient créés dans chaque quartier pour préparer les guerriers aux différentes batailles : des groupes formaient des camps opposés entre

²⁸³ Bah T.M. ; « Guerre, pouvoir et société ... », p.412.

²⁸⁴ J.C. Barbier, « La périphérie active dans la chefferie traditionnelle », in Espace et pouvoir dans les sociétés multi centrées, Bordeaux, AFA Aquitaine, MSHA, sd, p.25.

²⁸⁵ M.C. Mawa, « Bamendjou et les chefferies attenantes : un cas d'étude des relations inter-chefferies, des origines à 1905 », mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 2006, p.50.

²⁸⁶ E. Ghomsi, « Les Bamiléké du Cameroun », p.168.

eux, et se battaient sous la conduite des anciens à l'aide des rejetons de bananiers et de tiges de maïs comme arme, la tactique consistant à ne pas se faire toucher par les adversaires. Les armes d'entraînement étaient donc inoffensives. Les armes utilisées pour les guerres proprement dites étaient les flèches, les machettes, les couteaux, les bâtons, les lances, les lance-pierres, les javelots et les fusils fabriqués localement ou importés. Les chefferies attenantes avalent, elles aussi presque les mêmes types d'armes. La fin des conflits entre Bamendjou et ses voisins était marquée soit par la capitulation de l'un des adversaires, soit par la négociation, ou encore par la défaite effective.

C'est la capitulation qui a marqué la fin des conflits Bamendjou-Bangam et Bamendjou-Bahouan. Les Bangam étaient obligés de capituler ou de reconnaître leur défaite face à la coalition qu'avaient constituée Batié, Fotouni et Bamendjou contre eux. Bamendjou occupa alors les quartiers Tchoum et La'tsit qui appartenaient auparavant à Bangam. Quant à Bahouan, elle avait capitulé à cause de la supériorité en armement et en hommes de Bamendjou²⁸⁷.

Les conflits Bamendjou-Bansoa et Bamendjou-Baloum s'achevèrent par la négociation. Dans le premier cas, le territoire Chegan, objet du litige, fut alors reconnu comme appartenant à Bansoa. Dans le second cas, la zone Zem-ya, objet de convoitise de la part de Bamendjou, fut concédée à Baloum. Pour ce qui est de la défaite, elle était effective lorsque l'un des adversaires dominait l'autre sans autre forme de procès, notamment lors des annexions territoriales. Ce fut le cas lors des conflits qui Opposèrent Bamendjou à Batié; et au cours duquel Bamendjou annexa et occupa le quartier Kang qui appartenait antérieurement à Batié. C'est également la défaite qui marqua la fin du conflit frontalier Bamendjou-Fotouni. Les Fotouni, victorieux des Bamendjou, les chassèrent du quartier Baven situé dans leur territoire actuel et qui était par ailleurs le quartier limitrophe entre les deux chefferies²⁸⁸. La plupart de ces conflits s'atténuèrent avec l'arrivée des Allemands à Bamendjou en 1905.

Au total, les conflits permettaient aux vainqueurs d'agrandir leurs

²⁸⁷M.C. Mawa, «Bamendjou et les chefferies attenantes ... », p.59.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.60.

frontières .au détriment de vaincus. Lorsqu'il ne s'agissait pas de limites naturelles, les frontières étaient matérialisées par des piquets ou des plants. Comme frontières naturelles entre Bamendjou et ses voisins, nous pouvons citer la rivière *Famla* qui sépare Bamendjou de Batié, le cours d'eau appels *Nken'tagtetequi* sépare Bamendjou de Bansoa, la montagne *Nkenle* qui sépare Bamendjou de Saloum. La délimitation des frontières se faisait également par le creusement des tranchées qui étaient de grands fossés d'environ trois mètres de profondeur. Les tranchées constituèrent les frontières entre Bamendjou et Baham, Bamendjou et Fotouni, Bamendjou et Bangam.

IV. Le Rétablissement de la Paix

La violence s'est présentée en tout temps et en tout lieu comme une caractéristique des rapports sociaux et intercommunautaires. La paix n'étant pas une donnée statique mais plutôt une quête permanente, se trouve ainsi être l'idéal dont la recherche est la préoccupation majeure des hommes. Seulement, pour Y parvenir, les mécanismes divergent selon les peuples et les civilisations. C'est ainsi que les mécanismes de recherche de la paix ne sont pas toujours les mêmes dans les sociétés européennes que les sociétés négro-africaines. Il en est de mêmes de la résolution des conflits. Avec la pénétration européenne dans les sociétés négro-africaines, les données traditionnelles de recherche de la paix tendent peu à peu à disparaître. Autrement dit, les débats coutumiers cèdent progressivement le pas à la répression militaro-judiciaire. Sylvain Djache Nzefa parle à cet effet de « L'enfer du modernisme »²⁸⁹.

a. Par les méthodes traditionnelles

Avant l'invasion européenne, lorsque deux chefferies bamiléké se faisaient la guerre, un chef neutre, Bamiléké lui aussi, pouvait intervenir pour rétablir la paix. Pour ce faire, prenant à la main des tiges d'arbre de paix, il allait se promener sur le terrain litigieux et exhorter les belligérants à la paix. Cette intervention pacifique était rarement

²⁸⁹ S. Djache.Nzefa, Les chefferies Bamiléké dans L'enfer du modernisme, Paris, 1994.

repoussée²⁹⁰. Bamendjou avait, à la fin des conflits, conclu des alliances avec certains de ses adversaires. Les plus significatives étaient les alliances avec Bansoa et Baham.

Il y avait aussi - et surtout - une catégorie de femmes à mesure de faire cesser tout conflit. Il s'agit des *Magne* et des *Njuissi* qui marchaient toujours avec l'arbre de paix en main. Elles se sont ainsi fait remarquer par leur action dans la résolution des conflits. Les *Magne* et les *Njuissi* des chefferies en conflit se concertaient au plus fort des hostilités pour y mettre un terme. Pour signer la paix ou l'armistice, ce sont elles qui étaient envoyées pour les négociations. Les hommes reconnaissaient volontiers la sagesse et le bien-fondé des conseils de ces femmes; l'état de guerre cédait ainsi la place à la négociation²⁹¹.

La méthode la plus utilisée été à la négociation. Elle se faisait en deux étapes : l'appel à la négociation qui consistait en l'envoi des émissaires et la négociation proprement dite.

Dans la société bamiléké, le rôle d'émissaire était très souvent confié par le chef à certains dignitaires comme le *Mwala* et Le *Kwifo*. C'étaient des agents de communication par excellence. Les chefs les envoyaient auprès des chefs ennemis pour annoncer leur intention de négocier ou pour transmettre un quelconque message de paix. C'est ce qui s'est passé entre Le chef Gapgho de Baleveng et Le chef Kana I de Bafou, lors du conflit qui avait opposé pendant plus de dix ans les deux chefferies à propos de la frontière Ouest²⁹². Quelques fois, l'appel à la négociation avait lieu avant Le déclenchement des hostilités, surtout lorsque l'expédition militaire contre une chefferie voisine était précédée d'un message. L'ultimatum était lancé par l'envoi d'un message symbolique dont l'interprétation pouvait conduire soit à la guerre soit à

²⁹⁰ R. Delarozier, Les institutions politiques et sociales des populations dites Bamiléké, Mémoire III, IF AN Cameroun, 1950, p.22.

²⁹¹ A.P. Temgoua, « Statut et rôle de la femme dans la société bamiléké précoloniale », in J. Fame Ndongo et al, La femme camerounaise et la promotion du patrimoine culturel, Yaoundé, Editions CLE, 2002, p.77.

²⁹² M.M Temgoua Kenou, « Baleveng (Ouest-Cameroun) et les chefferies voisines : un exemple de relations inter-villages, 1900-1953 », mémoire de DIPES II en histoire, ENS, Yaoundé, 2005, p.71.

la préservation de la paix. Autrement dit, le chef du territoire convoité devait choisir soit la soumission pure et simple, soit la guerre ouverte. Le chef de Bafou avait préalablement envoyé au chef de Baleveng un ultimatum voilé. Ce dernier, bien qu'ayant compris le message, choisit la guerre au lieu de se soumettre; il préférait tomber les armes à la main.

Quant à la négociation proprement dite, elle était l'ensemble des démarches entreprises pour conclure un accord, Elle intervenait dès que les belligérants étaient mis au courant du désir de négocier par l'intermédiaire des émissaires, et pouvait déboucher sur les alliances matrimoniales. Le mariage entre deux chefferies les rendait sœurs et de ce fait réduisait les risques de les voir entrer en conflit. Après la longue guerre qui a opposé les chefferies Baleveng et Bafou, leurs chefs se sont retrouvés sur les lieux du litige à Nkonzem. Là, le chef de Bafou, pour conclure la paix et se faire pardonner de sa fourberie, a donné une jeune fille en mariage au chef de Baleveng, qui lui a rendu plus tard la politesse. Par la suite, un arbre de paix a été planté pour sceller ce pacte²⁹³.

Les mécanismes traditionnels de résolution des conflits n'ont pas toujours réussi à ramener la paix, ceci parce que, dans certains cas, ils intervenaient dans un contexte nouveau, à savoir l'avènement de la colonisation et l'introduction des méthodes modernes de résolution des conflits. Désormais, en plus des chefs, il y avait la forte présence des administrateurs coloniaux à la table des négociations.

b. Par les autorités coloniales

La première intervention dans la résolution des conflits en pays Bamiléké fut allemande. Après la première guerre mondiale, les Français vont à leur tour intervenir dans la résolution des conflits et jouer un rôle en faveur de la promotion de la paix.

L'administration allemande opta pour le maintien du statu quo territorial entre les chefferies en guerre. Elle décida de maintenir les limites issues des conquêtes. Les territoires jadis conquis ne devaient donc plus faire l'objet d'une quelconque remise en cause. Mais cette

²⁹³ Ibid., p.76.

situation ne dura pas à cause de la première guerre mondiale. Considérant que la question foncière était au centre des agressions de Bangou sur ses voisins, l'administration française décida de combler définitivement ses besoins par l'octroi des parcelles de terre. C'est ainsi que Bangou bénéficia de vastes étendues de terre sur la rive gauche du Noun. Les populations Bangou se déplacèrent massivement pour y fonder de nouvelles familles et créer des plantations. Ce nouveau village fut dénommé « Bangou II » ou « Bangou Rive Gauche »²⁹⁴.

Si militairement Batcham gagna la guerre contre Bangang, elle la perdit politiquement, ceci du fait de l'intervention de l'administration coloniale. En effet, les arrestations auxquelles procéda le Chef de Subdivision donnèrent lieu à ce qu'on appela « Le procès de Dschang » qui se déroula en deux audiences, à savoir l'audience du 5 août 1946 et celle des 21 et 22 novembre 1947. Au terme des débats, deux types de sanctions furent infligés aux mis en cause. Il s'agit des acquittements simples et des condamnations. Comme acquittements, les prévenus originaires de la chefferie Bangang furent libérés. Par contre, tous les prévenus originaires de la chefferie Batcham furent condamnés. On nota ainsi 13 cas de condamnation simples, les peines allant de 18 mois à 5 ans d'emprisonnement et 4 de 5 à 10 ans plus une interdiction de séjour dans la chefferie Batcham²⁹⁵. Les faits reprochés aux Batcham étaient principalement: « complicité active d'incendie volontaire », « comploté active de rébellion avec armes », « pillage ». Le fait le plus marquant fut la condamnation du chef de Batcham à dix ans d'interdiction de séjour, d'où la vacance du pouvoir dans la chefferie, et à 75 francs de taxe de justice. D'autre part, la zone litigieuse revint à la chefferie²⁹⁶ de Bangang, Batcham perdant ainsi son quartier dit Takoua

²⁹⁴ Le chef de « Bangou II » était le vassal du chef bangou ; c'est à ce dernier qu'il versait l'impôt collectif dans son village.

²⁹⁵ M. Tatiodjio M, « Les conflits armés ... », pp.117-118.

²⁹⁶ L'administration coloniale nomma à la tête de la chefferie de Batcham, pendant l'exil de son chef à Bangangte, un régent qui tenta de confisquer le pouvoir. Elle décida alors de faire revenir le chef exilé. La tension monta et on passa progressivement d'un conflit externe à un conflit interne. M. Tatiodjio M, « Les conflits armés ... », pp.66-67.

qui fait aujourd'hui partie du quartier Badengang dans la chefferie Bangang. Nous ne saurions négliger les petites parcelles qui se trouvaient de l'autre cote de la riviera Nkoka, sur lesquelles étaient implantées les Batcham et revendiquées à tort ou à raison par la chefferie Bangang.

c. Par l'administration camerounaise

Le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou qui se poursuit après l'indépendance du Cameroun vit de nombreuses descentes sur la zone litigieuse des autorités administratives (sous-préfet, préfet, gouverneur) et des forces de maintien de l'ordre (brigade de gendarmerie de Bangou), qui rendaient régulièrement compte à leurs hiérarchies. Par exemple, les multiples destructions de Babouantou à Bangou en 1980 ont fait l'objet d'un constat de l'inspecteur de police Elie Njeveme qui a transmis son rapport à Monsieur le Délégué General à la Sureté Nationale en date du 5 septembre pour l'informer des «atteintes aux biens et à la paix publique» qui constituaient une violation des articles 112, 236, 239, 316 et 317 du code pénal camerounais²⁹⁷.

On trouve au Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation, ainsi qu'à la Cour Suprême du Cameroun, de nombreux documents sur le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou²⁹⁸.

²⁹⁷ Rapport de L'inspecteur de police Elle Njeveme à Monsieur le Délégué General à la Sureté Nationale, Le 5 septembre 1980, cite par Kegang R., «Le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou ... », p.32.

²⁹⁸ Citons, entre autres: l'arrêté provincial no 104/APIPOUIDG/CAFJ du 15 octobre 1980 portant nomination des membres de la commission pour le règlement du conflit frontalier entre Bangou (Mifi) et Babouantou (Haut-Nkam); Le compte-rendu de la levée topographique sur la zone litigieuse Bangou-Babouantou, dresse par Le géomètre Robert-arlin Ngatchoua, Le 30 decembre1980; Le procès-verbal des travaux de la Commission Provinciale de 'règlement du litige frontalier Bangou-Babouantou, dresse à Bafoussam le 10 juillet 1981 ; le procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission Nationale de règlement des litiges de limites des circonscriptions administratives et des unités de commandement traditionnel, Yaoundé, le 1^{er} novembre 1982; l'état d'inventaire des dégâts causes du 23 aout au 2 septembre 199110rs des affrontements entre les populations bangou et bamboutous, dresse par

Il ressort de l'analyse de ces documents que la position de l'administration était l'impartialité. Elle condamnait les actes de nature à remettre en cause la paix, la cohésion, la cohabitation et l'unité nationale. Mais il se posait la question des réparations des dégâts issus des attaques et celle des responsabilités.

Par arrêté n° 104/AP/POUISG/CAJF du 15 octobre 1980, le gouverneur de la province de l'Ouest, Luc Loé, constitua, conformément au décret présidentiel n° 78/322 du 3 août 1978 portant institution des commissions pour le règlement des litiges relatifs aux limites des circonscriptions administratives et des unités de commandement traditionnel, une Commission Provinciale chargée de régler le conflit frontalier Bangou-Babouantou. La composition de la Commission était la suivante : les autorités administratives (le gouverneur, les préfets de la Mifi et du Haut-Nkam), les représentants des parties en conflit (les chefs traditionnels et les personnes choisies en fonction de leur bonne moralité), et les représentants des services techniques (délégués provinciaux du cadastre, des domaines et de l'agriculture). Après plusieurs descentes sur le terrain, descentes au cours des- quelles elle a marché sur les limites revendiquées par chacune des chefferies en conflit, la Commission Provinciale a conclu que les limites des deux chefferies n'avaient jamais été fixées avec précision. En raison de l'absence de textes antérieurs et officiels déterminant ces limites, la Commission s'est prononcée pour le découpage de la zone litigieuse en deux parties égales dont les contours seront déterminés par les services techniques compétents.²⁹⁹

Mais le verdict de la Commission Provinciale rendu public Le 10 juillet 1981 n'a pas été acceptés par Bangou qui estimait qu'il était

l'adjoind au sous-préfet de Bangou le 06 septembre 1991 ; le rapport confidentiel du sous-préfet de Bangou sur le conflit Bangou-Babouantou, adresse au préfet de la Mifi, le 27 septembre 1991 ; le procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission Nationale chargée du règlement du litige relatif aux limites territoriales entre Bangou et Babouantou, du 27 octobre 1995. Cf. archives du MINATD et archives de la Cour Suprême du Cameroun à Yaoundé. .

²⁹⁹ Archives du MINATD, procès-verbal des travaux de la Commission Provinciale du règlement du litige frontalier Bangou-Babouantou, 10 juillet 1981.

entache d'irrégularités, et qui a immédiatement interjeté appel Le 13 juillet. Le 23 septembre, la Présidence de la République, par lettre n°01621/SG/PR, demanda au MINAT de «veiller au règlement des litiges tels que Bangou-Babouantou ace qu'il soit exclusivement tenu compte des frontières ayant existé entre les deux villages depuis l'époque coloniale »³⁰⁰. C'est alors que la Commission Nationale de règlement des litiges de limites des circonscriptions administratives et des unités de commandement traditionnel se saisit du dossier. Mais ses travaux de novembre 1982 ne furent pas concluants³⁰¹. Pendant ce temps, sur le terrain, c'était le maintien du statu quo administratif et la recrudescence des incidents entre Bangou et Babouantou. C'est l'assassinat du nomme Michel Simeu en novembre 1992 qui détermina la mise sur pied d'une nouvelle commission chargée de statuer exclusivement sur le litige Bangou-Babouantou au bilan déjà très lourd. Créée par arrêté présidentiel du 10 janvier 1995, et présidée par le Ministre d'Etat chargé de l'Administration Territoriale, la Commission Nationale du règlement du litige Bangou-Babouantou effectua une descente sur le terrain le 16 août 1995, ce qui lui permit de se rendre compte de la complexité du problème, Elle devait donc ouvrir de façon à parvenir à une solution aussi juste et équitable que possible, une solution à laquelle les deux chefferies en conflit pourraient adhérer sans problème. Le but visé était en effet de restaurer la paix et la concorde entre les deux chefferies sœurs. Après avoir réfléchi sur les suggestions des uns et des autres, la Commission a à l'unanimité décidé de partager la zone litigieuse en trois parties: une zone 1 attribuée à Babouantou, une zone 2 attribuée à Bana qui pourtant n'avait jamais revendiqué cette parcelle d'environ 20 hectares, et une zone 3 attribuée

³⁰⁰ Ibid., cf. note n°146/N/MINATIDOT/OA du Directeur de l'Organisation du Territoire à l'attention de Monsieur le Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale, le 28 septembre 1981.

³⁰¹ L'unanimité de ses membres ne se fit pas sur la décision d'annuler le verdict de la Commission Provinciale pour considérer la tranchée de 1922 comme limite des deux chefferies. Cf. procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission Nationale de règlement des litiges de limites des circonscriptions administratives et des unités de commandement traditionnel, dressé à Yaoundé le 1^{er} novembre 1982.

à Bangou³⁰². Par arrêté n0103/CAB/PR du 12 mars 1996, le Président de la République Paul Biya porta approbation et officialisa le procès-verbal de la Commission Nationale du règlement du litige Bangou-Babouantou. Le MINAT matérialisa les nouvelles limites sur le terrain en plaçant les bornes.

Non satisfaite par cette décision, la chefferie Bangou s'est plaint à la Cour Suprême contre l'Etat du Cameroun. Le 24 avril 1997, la Chambre Administrative de la Cour Suprême a annulé le procès-verbal de la Commission Nationale et a donné gain de cause à Bangou.³⁰³ Ce jugement a été attaqué par l'Etat du Cameroun Le 25 août 1997 pour « mauvaise interprétation de la loi et dénaturation des faits ». Le 25 novembre 1998, le Président de la République a demandé au MINAT de prendre les dispositions nécessaires en vue de la reprise des travaux dans le sens infléchi par la Cour Suprême. Le 23 août 2001, la Cour Suprême, siégeant en assemblée plénière, a déclaré l'Etat du Cameroun déchu de son appel³⁰⁴. Mais ce jugement est resté lettre morte, la loi n°2003/016 du 22 décembre 2003 ayant attribué à l'Exécutif l'exclusivité de la gestion des litiges de limites des circonscriptions administratives et des unités de commandement traditionnel. Toute possibilité de recours auprès d'une instance judiciaire est désormais écartée.

Les bornes plantées par le MINAT en 1996 ne sont pas enlevées. La confusion qui règne au sujet de ce litige justifie la persistance du conflit. Les tensions restent entretenues entre les deux chefferies.

³⁰² Archives du MINATD, procès-verbal de la réunion de la Commission Nationale chargée du règlement du Litige relatif aux limites territoriales entre Bangou et Babouantou, Yaoundé, Le 27 octobre 1995.

³⁰³ Archives de la Cour Suprême du Cameroun, jugement n070/96-97 du 24 avril 1997 de la Chambre Administrative de la Cour Suprême du Cameroun sur L'affaire Etat du Cameroun contre groupement Bangou» (grosse).

³⁰⁴ Ibid., arrêté no.61/A de l'Assemblée Plénière de la Cour Suprême du Cameroun dans L'affaire Etat du Cameroun contre groupement Bangou », 23 août 2001.

Conclusion

Au total, le dynamisme des chefferies bamiléké marque par la volonté d'expansion et la recherche de l'espace vital était la principale cause des conflits frontaliers dans les hauts plateaux de l'Ouest-Cameroun. Devant l'imminence de la ruine de leur société, conscientes des peines et souffrances de leurs hommes engagés sur Le front de guerre, conscientes des dégâts et des pertes matérielles, les deux parties en conflit, soit par l'initiative d'une tierce personne soit par celle d'une partie engagée dans un conflit, renonçaient - ou étaient obligées de renoncer - à la violence et essayaient de résoudre pacifiquement leur différend. Les administrateurs coloniaux avaient généralement pour souci le «rétablissement de l'ordre public». L'administration camerounaise était appelée à prendre des mesures nécessaires pour préserver la paix, la stabilité et la cohésion nationale.

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Résolution Des Conflits Intercommunautaires Au Cameroun cas des litiges fonciers de Makenene et Mbangassina

By

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Résumé

Marquées par le caractère cosmopolite de leurs populations respectives, les localités de Makenene et Mbangassina au Cameroun sont aujourd'hui des terrains d'affrontements entre les communautés qui y habitent. Ces affrontements se font sur fond de disputes foncières. Les efforts entrepris par l'autorité administrative n'ont pas toujours porté des fruits. Le spectre d'une haine intercommunautaire menace les habitants. Interrogées sur leur avis par rapport aux solutions durables adopter, les populations impliquées n'arrivent pas à accorder leurs voix. Elles s'accusent mutuellement et se renvoient la responsabilité. Les replis identitaires transparaissent à travers les arguments qu'elles avancent pour justifier leur installation et leurs actes. Toutefois, analysant leurs déclarations ainsi que leur environnement, le présent chapitre tente de retenir des éléments de l'histoire à partir desquels l'on peut formuler des propositions fiables susceptibles de guider le décideur qu'est l'Etat dans son initiative de résolution de ces conflits intercommunautaires.

Mots-clés: Cameroun, Terre, Conflits, Résolution

Abstract

Marked by the cosmopolitan nature of their respective populations, the localities of Makenene and Mbangassina in the centre region of

Cameroon are today zones of confrontations between those communities inhabiting the area. These confrontations are being manifested in the form of land disputes. Measures undertaken by the administrative authorities never yielded any promising results. The spectrum of inter-community hatred however threatened the inhabitants. Interrogated as to what form of lasting solution “to be adopted, the population involved could not agree. They mutually laid blames on each other. Tribalism transpired through the arguments advanced in order to justify their installation and acts. Nevertheless, while analysing their declarations and their environment, this chapter tries to retain elements of history through which we could formulate reliable propositions susceptible in guiding the decision makers which is the state in its initiative towards inter-community conflict resolution.

Key words: Cameroon, Land, Conflict, Resolution

Introduction

Situées dans la région du centre du Cameroun, les localités de Makenene et Mbangassina apparaissent comme des villes cosmopolites de par leur peuplement. Si les Nyokon constituent la population la plus anciennement implantée à Makenene, il convient cependant de préciser que depuis 1926, à la faveur de la construction d’un axe routier Ndikinimeki- Tonga-Bangante reliant Makenene à l’Ouest-Cameroun, on note une affluence croissante des Bamiléké en quête des terres fertiles³⁰⁵. Le rapprochement antérieur entre Nyokon et Bamiléké avait donné naissance aune communauté appelée Kinding.³⁰⁶ Les Bamiléké sont suivis plus tard des populations en provenance de L’actuelle région du Nord-Ouest et de diverses autres zones du pays.

Ces différentes communautés s’illustrent comme actrices d’un

³⁰⁵ Dong Mougol, «Migrations internes et problèmes fonciers au Cameroun: les cas de Makenene et Mbangassina dans la région du Mbam, de 1926 à nos jours », thèse de Doctorat/PhD en Histoire, Université de Yaoundé I, 2007,

³⁰⁶ Les Kinding sont les descendants d’un couple ancestral forme de Heukomina, un immigré bamiléké venu de”Bangoulap et Ya’ ah, une Nyokon.

vieux conflit foncier interne qui implique les Banen voisins. Pareil a Mbangassina ou, du fait de manque d'espace dans leur Lékié natale, les populations éton et Manguissa ont déferlé pour envahir les terres des autochtones Ossananga afin d'y pratiquer l'agriculture.³⁰⁷

Ce tableau sombre qui empoisonne le climat social dans ces deux localités du Cameroun fait appel à une certaine interrogation. Il convient de chercher comprendre quelles ont été, dans le passé, les tentatives de dialogue amorcé par les protagonistes de ces conflits. L'on peut aussi se demander quelles sont les propositions des acteurs de ces conflits en vue d'une réflexion visant une résolution durable. Que peut-on en tirer pour aider l'Etat à résoudre ces problèmes intercommunautaires?

Ce questionnement appelle une étude basée sur une démarche qui consiste à recueillir et analyser les propositions émises par les acteurs des faits. La présente réflexion s'articule alors autour de trois axes à savoir, le constat d'un dialogue difficile entre les communautés vivant à Makenene, suivi de l'analyse de la responsabilité de l'Etat et l'ébauche d'une solution, et enfin l'appréhension de l'état d'esprit des Ossananga ainsi que la critique des solutions proposés par toutes les parties prenantes du problème foncier de Mbangassina.

I- Un dialogue difficile entre les communautés de Makenene

Le problème foncier qui, jusqu'ici, a engendré des affrontements physiques à Makenene, est celui qui oppose les Nyokon aux Banen, tout en impliquant les Bamiléké. Ce litige avait obligé Le gouverneur de la province du Centre, M. Siegfried Etame Massoma, à convoquer en janvier 1999, à l'Hôtel de ville de Bafia, chef-lieu du département du Mbam-et-Inoubou, les représentants de toutes les communautés vivant à Makenene et liées de près ou de loin à ce conflit, à savoir: Banen, Nyokon, Kinding, Bamiléké et « Bamenda »³⁰⁸. Le but de la réunion fut

³⁰⁷ Dong Mougnol, « Migrations internes », pp. 273-299.

³⁰⁸ Le nom «Bamenda» qui désigne officiellement la principale ville de la région actuelle du Nord-Ouest au: Cameroun, est une appellation abusivement attribuée aux populations anglophones en provenance de ladite région.

d'M entendre les parties et de dégager des solutions³⁰⁹. Les différentes délégations présentée étaient respectivement conduites par Léon Bahonoui Batende pour les Banen, le Pro Daniel Abwa pour les Nyokon, e Dr Emmanuel Kitchabo pour les Kinding, Joseph Ngassa pour les Bamiléké et Joseph Babe pour les populations dites Bamenda³¹⁰. Chacune de ces personnalités avait pris la parole pour exposer le point de vue défendu par sa communauté.

Des différentes interventions, l'on peut retenir que les Banen accusaient ouvertement l'administration camerounaise d'avoir laissé pourrir la situation. Pour Léon Bahonoui Batende³¹¹, il s'agissait en clair d'un faux problème qui aurait pu être résolu depuis longtemps par l'administration si elle en avait la volonté³¹². D'après ce dernier, la frontière entre les territoires nyokon et banen n'était pas respectée car, selon lui, les villages litigieux -Boua, Ndockmakong, Ndokohok-New-Bell - relevaient du territoire des Banen. Il conclut en requérant de l'administration une délimitation territoriale de chaque village et que ceux qui occupent illégalement les terres de Ndiki les quittent “.³¹³

Cette solution suggérée par la communauté banen suscitait une réelle inquiétude étant donné que les Bamiléké et les “Bamenda clamèrent ce jour qu'ils ne s'étaient pas installés de force sur les terrains litigieux. Ces derniers s'estimaient alors victimes d'une mésentente opposant Banen et Nyokon³¹⁴. Les Nyokon sont alors places au centre du conflit. Profondément affectes par les accusations proférées par les uns et les autres, ceux-ci, dans leur argumentation, tentèrent de minimiser l'ampleur de la question des frontières avec les Banen. Les Nyokon estimaient en *effet* être des “victimes innocentes II qui n'avaient commis aucun mal en vendant les terres tout comme,

³⁰⁹ N. Amayena, “Comment mettre un terme au différend frontalier Nyokon-Banen?”Cameroon Tribune”n0677213061, vendredi 22 janvier 1999, p. 3

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Il convient de préciser que ce dernier assumait en ce moment, la charge de député du Mbam-et-Inouboul, l'assemblée nationale.

³¹² Amayena, « Comment mettre un terme».

³¹³ Ibid. Les Ndiki sont une constituante du grand groupe banen du Cameroun.

³¹⁴ Amayena, « Comment mettre un terme»,

selon eux, Le faisaient aussi les Banen³¹⁵. Le Pr Daniel Abwa de s'interroger en ces termes: est-ce parce que les Nyokon vendent des terrains qu'ils subissent ce qui leur arrive?³¹⁶

Il convient de remarquer que si les Nyokon reconnaissent courageusement avoir vendu les terres aux Bamiléké, ils tiennent à partager les retombées négatives de cet acte avec les Banen dont le représentant a voulu se démarquer de toute responsabilité.

On peut remarquer que dans ce conflit, chacune des communautés voudrait s'ériger en victime, nulle n'étant disposée à assumer la moindre culpabilité dans la détérioration du tissu social à Makenene. Toutes les communautés impliquées croient que l'administration peut résoudre le problème, mais aucune d'elles n'est prête à faire la moindre concession raisonnable. Les Banen prescrivent un déguerpissement pur et simple des étrangers installés sur leurs terres ; les Bamiléké et « Bamenda » s'attachent plutôt à leurs parcelles, arguant qu'ils sont dans leurs droits, tandis que les Nyokon clament la légitimité de leur présence et la légalité de leurs actes 'dans cette zone litigieuse. Le dialogue initié par le gouverneur entraine ainsi dans une véritable impasse.

En réalité, la question qui se pose est celle de savoir si l'administration est eux-mêmes totalement innocente dans ce conflit foncier banen-nyokon qui est avant tout un problème de dispute des limites entre les arrondissements actuels de Ndikinimeki et de Makenene. Interrogeons le passé pour mieux comprendre la probable responsabilité de cette administration avant de penser une issue à la crise.

II- De la responsabilité de l'Etat a une tentative de solution

Durant la période coloniale, l'administration française avait pris l'habitude de s'appuyer sur certains critères qui guidaient la création des unités administratives et leur délimitation territoriale. Il ne serait pas déplaisant de prendre en compte certains d'entre eux dans l'objectif

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

de mieux saisir ce qui s'est passé à Makenene et illustrer ce qui pourrait être corrigé. Parmi ces critères observés, l'on retrouvait en *effet* les exigences suivantes:

- la présence d'un potentiel suffisant de personnel de commandement européen ;
- L'importance démographique de la localité
- Les critères historiques ;
- Les critères ethno-géographiques.³¹⁷

Intéressons-nous aux deux derniers qui semblent très importants pour les faits évoqués dans la présente étude. En réalité, pour songer résoudre le conflit foncier Banen-Nyokon, le devoir de mémoire s'impose. Il est en effet nécessaire de faire un retour en arrière à appréhender à nouveau l'histoire de l'installation de ces deux peuples dans la localité.

Le territoire acquis par les Banen avant la colonisation se situait entre 10°20' et 10°45' de longitude Est et entre 4°40' et 4°50' de latitude Ouest, soit environ 430 km²; il allait donc jusqu'à la rivière Makenene³¹⁸. En d'autres termes, cette rivière s'élevait déjà en frontière naturelle entre le territoire banen et celui des Nyokon. Rappelons aussi que c'est le maquis, qui n'a commencé qu'en 1955³¹⁹, qui a fait traverser les Nyokon vers le côté des Banen. Or à cette date, les peuples avaient déjà été stabilisés depuis longtemps, après la

³¹⁷ D. Abwa, "«Commandement européen»- «commandement indigène» au Cameroun sous mandat français, de 1916 à 1960 ", thèse de Doctorat d'Etat en Histoire, Université de Yaoundé I, 1994, pp. 203-204.

³¹⁸ I. Dugast, «Inventaire ethnique du Sud-Cameroun », mémoire de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire du Cameroun, série population, n° 1, 1949, p. 46. Ce territoire était limité au Nord par les régions de Dschang et Yabassi, au Sud les Banen de L'Inoubou (fleuve Makenene), à l'Ouest par les Bandem et à l'Est par les rivières Nde et Noun. (Confer Dong Mognol, «Migrations internes », p. 166).

³¹⁹ C'est en juillet 1955 que l'Union des Populations Camerounaises (UPC) est interdite par l'administration coloniale française, Le parti entre alors dans la clandestinité et prend les armes pour réclamer l'Indépendance du pays.

conquête coloniale européenne de la fin du XIX^e siècle. Cette dernière migration forcée effectuée par une partie des Nyokon relevait donc logiquement des migrations dites internes qui étaient fréquemment observées durant L'ère coloniale. Une telle analyse de L'environnement historique et ethno- géographique permet de constater que, du fait de l'antériorité de leur installation dans la région, les Banen sont en réalité les seuls supposés autochtones sur ces terres litigieuses.

Le jumelage des critères historiques et ethno-géographiques élaborés par Le colonisateur français aurait dû éclairer L'administration postcoloniale dans son initiative de délimitation territoriale effectuée entre les arrondissements de Ndikinimeki et de Makenene. Une logique visant un début de solution à ce problème préconiserait en clair que Le gouvernement revole les limites administratives séparant les deux arrondissements; qu'il tienne effectivement compte de ces réalités historiques et de la configuration ethno-géographique d'avant l'ère du maquis, voire même de la période précoloniale. L'histoire offrirait ainsi une ébauche de solution raisonnable et il transparaîtrait alors une frontière naturelle symbolisée par la rivière Makenene. Cette frontière devrait donc être ressuscitée et revalorisée afin de maintenir la paix dans cette région.

Sans toutefois prôner le délogement des populations comme le veulent les Banen, cette solution a le mérite de montrer concrètement que les villages litigieux de Ndockmakong, Ndokohok-New-Bell et Boua devraient revenir sous l'autorité de la sous-préfecture de Ndikinimeki, bien qu'étant peuples des Nyokon et Bamiléké. Ceux-ci continueront cependant à y résider, mais en tant que populations immigrées. Une telle solution peut cependant paraître inquiétante pour les Nyokon. En réalité, l'on ne saurait oser penser que ces critères de répartition des unités administratives appliquée par l'administration coloniale, et dont la logique est valorisée dans cette étude, a pu échapper à la vigilance de l'administration postcoloniale. Alors se pose la question 'de savoir quelles pouvaient en effet être les mobiles qui ont conduit celle-ci agir différemment.

Lorsqu'on observe et analyse les faits, l'on remarque que certaines raisons particulières ont pu influencer la décision de l'administration postcoloniale. Dans un premier temps, l'on peut croire qu'au leu

d'obéir à la logique de l'administration coloniale, les autorités du Cameroun Independent se sont plutôt préoccupées de regrouper au sein d'une même circonscription, toutes les populations impliquées dans le maquis. Ceci leur a permis de contrôler aisément cette zone trouble qu'était Makenene en la mettant sous état d'urgence afin de mieux cerner et neutraliser les rebelles ayant élu leur camp dans cette tocante.³²⁰

On peut également, dans un second temps, comprendre qu'en optant pour la répartition administrative en vigueur actuellement dans la localité, c'est-à-dire en incluant dans l'arrondissement de Makenene ces villages situés au-delà de la rivière Makenene, l'administration postcoloniale a probablement été influencée plutôt par une autre vieille tactique des Français qui avalent la manie de « mettre sous une même autorité administrative des populations parlant la même langue ... »³²¹. Force est toutefois de noter que dans le contexte actuel, avec les revendications des Banen, il serait raisonnable de privilégier les critères historique précédèrent évoqué et qui attribue aux Banen l'antériorité de la propriété de ces terres.

Cet argument de l'antériorité dans la possession des terres est d'ailleurs celui que les Nyokon brandissent aujourd'hui face aux Bamiléké dans la ville de Makenene ou un autre conflit foncier oppose les deux communautés (Nyokon et Bamiléké) sur d'autres terrains.³²² Refuser donc que les terres litigieuses des villages concernés soient rattachées à l'unité administrative qui regroupe les populations d'origine banen, c'est-à-dire à l'arrondissement de Ndikinimeki, serait pour les Nyokon, une contradiction malhonnête dans leur propre

³²⁰ Pour plus de détails sur la rébellion dans cette région du Cameroun, lire Louis-Claude Oubel, «Le maquis dans la subdivision de Ndikinimeki, 1955-1971», mémoire de maîtrise en Histoire, Université de Yaoundé I, 2001.

³²¹ Abwa, "Commandement européen" - «commandement indigène”», p.221.

³²²G. M. Dong Mognol, «De la conquête foncière aux crises interethniques au Cameroun: cas des Bamiléké et leurs voisins », in F. Nkankeu et C. Bryant, Regards multidisciplinaires sur les conflits fonciers et leurs impacts socio-économico-politiques au Cameroun, Montréal, Laboratoire de développement durable et dynamique territoriale, 10, pp. 44-47.

argumentaire développé - face aux Bamiléké auxquels ils refusent toute implication à la gestion politique de Makenene.³²³ La prudence prescrite dans la recherche de solution à ce conflit foncier de Makenene est – également à recommander dans la résolution des problèmes fonciers de Mbangassina.

III. Le réalisme des Ossananga de Mbangassina

Face à l'ampleur des occupations foncières effectuées par les populations éton et Manguissa venues de la Lékié voisine, les Ossananga de la région de Mbangassina sont envahis par une certaine détresse. Pour mieux saisir leur état d'esprit, retenons ce commentaire que fait le chef Akoumba Koua du village de Taiba:

Pour moi, il est trop tard pour pouvoir solutionner ces problèmes fonciers. Le mal est déjà fait, la majeure partie de mes terres est déjà occupée, Dans la plupart des cas, les autochtones ossananga sont aujourd'hui minoritaires dans les villages qui leur appartenaient autrefois. Les Eton-Mangissa nous ont supplantés. A certains endroits, nous n'avons plus de terrain aujourd'hui, - ce sont les allogènes qui nous en vendent parce qu'ils en ont pris en excès. S'il fallait refaire l'histoire, j'exigerais que les occupations des espaces se fassent de façon réglementée, avec des portions clairement délimitées.³²⁴

³²³ Ibid., p. 46. 1926, les Nyokon sont mécontents de la nomination d'un Bamiléké-Kinding à la tête de leur chefferie supérieure. En 1941, une nouvelle opposition est observée lors de la nomination de Kitchabo Ndjaby au même poste. En 1950, s la mort de ce dernier, les Nyokon empêchent son remplacement par son fils Minamou Henoch Ndjaby. En 1996, les Nyokon prennent mal l'élection de Tchato, un Bamiléké, à la tête de la jeune mairie. En 2002, l'élection au me poste de Mme Justine Bloemen, native bamiléké, fit des remous.

³²⁴ Entretien avec Jean-Marie Akoumba Koua, 51 ans, chef du village Taiba (Mbangassina), Taiba, 27 nove 2003. Pour être plus explicite, il convient de préciser que des villages ossananga tels-que Ebina, Taiba, Mpi, Eyambo Etam-Nyat sont aujourd'hui presque entièrement peuplés des immigrés éton et manguissa.

Ce point de vue émanant d'une autorité traditionnelle dénote le remords qui habite aujourd'hui les Ossananga de Mbangassina. On peut y voir un certain réalisme qui contraint ce peuple autochtone à une triste résignation car, a bien analysé ces propos d'Akoumba, la le^{9^{on}} a retenu serait que les faits sont faits et ne peuvent être défaits; toutefois, ils peuvent être limités pour éviter qu'ils ne s'aggravent. D'autres Ossananga vont même plus loin dans ce réalisme face à la question foncière. Ils affichent une attitude complaisante à l'endroit des immigrés.

Conscients en effet non seulement de l'immense vacuité des terres dans cette région, mais aussi de leur incapacité avérée de les mettre en valeur, ces Ossananga se déclarent prêts à partager leur patrimoine foncier avec les allogènes. Ils reconnaissent en effet que: certains immigrés éton-mangissa, arrivés depuis plus de quarante années, n'ont plus de repère; dans leur Lékié natale. Ceux-ci sont de facto déconnectés de leur région au point où ils se font enterrer dans leur terre d'accueil du Mbam³²⁵. Partant de ce constat, les Ossananga se sont rendus à l'évidence que de tels lumières ne pouvaient plus regagner leur région d'origine qu'ils n'ont d'ailleurs jamais connue.

On peut être surpris par une telle option conciliante émanant d'une communauté autochtone et exprimée à l'endroit des immigrés qui se sent accapés de leurs terres. La plausible justification d'une telle complaisance serait la parente étroite qui lie les communautés éton, Mangissa et ossananga.

L'histoire révèle en effet que ces trois groupes ethniques habitaient auparavant la rive droite du fleuve Sanaga, c'est-à-dire sur le territoire actuellement occupé par des Ossananga ils constituaient tous un seul et même peuple issu des mêmes parents. C'est une attaque externe qui a poussé une partie d'entre eux à migrer en traversant Le fleuve³²⁶. Ceux qui se sont déplacés vers l'actuel département de la Lékié constituent aujourd'hui les groupes Mangissa Eton. Selon Engelbert Mveng, la traversée de la Sanaga est racontée à travers ce qu'il appelle « légende

³²⁵ Entretien avec Ndongo Manga, 42 ans, chef du village Mbangassina, Mbangassina, 23 août 2003.

³²⁶ Dong Mougnol, « Migrations internes », pp. 306-307.

de la traverses du Yom sur Le dos d'un immense serpent »³²⁷. Reconnue des trois peuples, cette traversée se serait effectuée au XVIIIe siècle³²⁸. Au-delà de l'aspect légendaire qui teinte cette histoire, ce qui est important de retenir est la conscience des trois peuples partager un passe commun, c'est-à-dire la conscience de leur parente. Voilà pourquoi les u pouvaient encore manifester de la tolérance dans la conquête de leurs terres par leu « frères » que l'histoire avait éloignés. Un de nos informateurs, en l'occurrence Nko Luc, qualifie d'ailleurs leurs migrations d'une opération de retour vers les sources³²⁹.

Pour Jean Pierre Adzessa, chef du village ossananga de Biatangana, la résolution des conflits fonciers de Mbangassina devrait forcément passé par la délimitation des portions de terrains de chaque immigré, en évitant d'attribuer des surfaces exorbitantes à un même individu. Ce travail qui, selon lui, est assez indispensable, devrait aussi être accompagne d'une sensibilisation à entreprendre par l'Etat et qui viserait à faire comprendre aux Eton-Manguissa qu'ils se trouvent sur les terres des autres et que par conséquent, ils devraient respecter les traditions en vigueur dans cette localité d'accueil.³³⁰

Pour qu'une telle solution soit effective dans L'arrondissement de Mbangassina qui est déjà occupé à ce jour, il faudra exiger des immigrés beaucoup de sacrifices. Il faudra que l'Etat parvienne à réquisitionner les terres déjà acquises avant de procéder à la délimitation et a une quelconque redistribution. Logiquement, L'idée tendrait la route car, les immigrés, du fait qu'ils ne sont détenteurs d'aucun document officiel relatif aux terres qu'ils occupent aujourd'hui, ne sont donc pas légalement propriétaires fonciers aux yeux de l'Etat. Ce dernier peut d'ailleurs se prévaloir de ce fait pour reprendre les

³²⁷E. Mveng, Histoire du Cameroun, Tome 1, Yaoundé, CEPER, 1985, p. 253.

³²⁸ S. Ateba Noah, «Les problèmes fonciers à Yaoundé à L'époque coloniale: 1888-1956. Etude historique mémoire de OIPESIT en Histoire, ENS de Yaoundé, 2002, p. 34.

³²⁹ Entretien avec Luc Nko Noa, 65 ans, agriculteur immigré d'origine rnanguissa, Biakoa (Mbangassina), 26 novembre 2003. ‘

³³⁰ Entretien avec Jean-Pierre Adzessa, 50 ans environ, chef du village Biatangana, Mbangassina, 24 août 2003.

terres inexploitées et les incorporer dans le domaine national. Mais dans la réalité, il est aussi difficile de penser que ceci puisse se produire sans remous orchestras par les immigrés. Les Eton-Manguissa ont d'ailleurs une autre perception des faits et préconisent d'autres solutions.

Pour la communauté éton-Manguissa, les terres qu'ils occupent aujourd'hui dans le pays ossananga doivent être considérées par tous, y compris par les autorités publiques, comme leur propriété. Elles ne devraient donc plus être aliénées sous une quelconque raison. C'est pourquoi ils réclament à cors et à cris la délivrance des titres fonciers³³¹. Or c'est ici que bute leur démarche. L'absence ou la rareté de titres fonciers chez les allogènes est l'une des justifications de la multiplicité des conflits fonciers entre des voisins, entre les vendeurs et les acheteurs. C'est aussi un élément que les Ossananga savent si bien manipuler en leur faveur. Selon les Eton-Manguissa, ce sont les chefs ossananga qui bloqueraient le processus de délivrance de ce précieux sésame qui officialiserait leurs droits fonciers. D'après eux, chaque fois qu'il y a une demande formulée par les allogènes, l'administration renvoie d'abord les concernés vers les chefs de village, afin que ces derniers fassent connaître au préalable leur avis sur la question³³².

Pour un complément d'information, il convient de mentionner que, d'après les dispositions de la loi fixant le régime foncier au Cameroun, une demande d'un titre foncier devrait passer par une commission consultative dont nous empruntons la composition des travaux d'André Tientcheu Njiako:

La commission consultative comprend, conformément à L'article 12 du décret no. 76/165 du 27 avril 1976 fixant les modalités de gestion du domaine national:

- Le sous-préfet ou le chef de district, président;
- un représentant du service des domaines, secrétaire;
- un représentant du service de cadastre ;

³³¹Entretien avec Ananga Mballa

³³²Idem.

- un représentant du service de l'urbanisme si le projet est urbain;
- un représentant du ministre dont la compétence a un rapport avec le projet ;
- le chef et deux notables du village ou de la collectivité où se trouve le terrain.³³³

Il est donc vrai que les chefs de village font partie de cette commission qui est l'une des étapes par lesquelles doit passer une demande de titre foncier. Le 16 décembre 2005, ce décret n° 76/165 fut certes modifié et complété à travers un autre décret n° 2005/481, mais ce dernier accordait toujours aux chefs et notables, un rôle important dans la commission consultative. Ceci transparait dans l'alinéa 7 de l'article 13 de ce récent décret du 16 décembre 2005 qui stipule que

Lorsque le bornage ne peut être achevé en présence de l'ensemble des membres de la Commission consultative, le président de ladite commission désigne un comité ad hoc qui supervise les travaux de bornage jusqu'à leur achèvement. Le chef de village et un notable du lieu font obligatoirement partie de ce comité³³⁴.

Il est ainsi clairement établi que les deux derniers décrets présidentiels consacrés aux conditions d'obtention du titre foncier au Cameroun reconnaissent aux chefs de village et notables une certaine influence dans la commission consultative. Or, on sait que tous les chefs de troisième degré de la région de Mbangassina sont issus de la communauté autochtone ossananga, ce qui peut en effet être un

³³³A. Tientcheu Njako, *Droits réels et domaine national au Cameroun*, Yaoundé, Presses Universitaires d'Afrique. 2005. p. 83.

³³⁴ Décret no. 2QOS/481 du 16 décembre 2005, portant " Modification et complément de certaines dispositions du décret no. 76/16S du 27 avril 1976 fixant les conditions d'obtention du titre foncier au Cameroun Tribune n° 8499/4698 du lundi 19 décembre 2005, p. 6.

élément défavorable aux allogènes. A en croire les immigrés éton-Manguissa, ces chefs profitent de cette occasion pour bloquer le processus. Excédés, les Eton-Manguissa se montrent réfractaire à la loi en suggérant à l'administration d'ignorer dorénavant l'étape faisant intervenir les chefs traditionnels et de s'occuper entièrement des dossiers³³⁵. Pour eux, l'administration se rendrait complice d'une discrimination car « il est inadmissible que des gens installés quelque part depuis 1961 et même avant, y soient toujours traités d'allogènes, ainsi que leurs enfants qui parfois même, ont des mères ossananga et sont nés sur les terres concernées. Ceci est une situation sérieuse qu'il convient de revoir ». ³³⁶

Ce conseil, qui va à l'encontre de la loi, prouve une fois de plus l'audace que certains ont dans leur ébauche de solution à ces conflits; il dévoile également les pièges que l'on pose à l'Etat dans la résolution des problèmes fonciers du Mbam.

Pour plus de détails, il convient de préciser que Le titre foncier que l'on délivre à un individu est toujours relatif à un terrain bien délimité que l'on retire du domaine national. Sa procédure d'obtention prévoyait en premier lieu, avant la modification intervenue le 16 décembre 2005, un dépôt par le requérant, d'un dossier de demande auprès du sous-préfet qui a pour devoir de Le transmettre à la section départementale. Un mois après, le préfet devait "informer le public de sa décision par un arrêté fixant la date de constat d'occupation par la commission consultative"³³⁷. Par la suite, venait le bornage en présence des voisins dont la signature du procès-verbal est nécessaire pour la

³³⁵ Entretien avec Nko Noa.

³³⁶ Entretien avec Ananga Mballa.

La date de 1961 renvoie à l'ouverture à Mbangassina d'un siècle dénommé SABM ou Société Africaine du Bois du Mbam. Ceci a provoqué une forte immigration des populations en provenance de la Lekie pour des besoins professionnels

³³⁷ E. Moyo, «La gestion foncière au Cameroun: instruments, cadre institutionnel et problèmes actuels», in *La gestion urbaine dans les pays en développement : objectifs-instruments techniques*. Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, école de Bordeaux, note et documents, série: synthèses de session, no 11, décembre 1988 pp. 295-303.

validité de l'opération³³⁸. Le préfet transmettait alors Le dossier dans les trente jours la direction des domaines qui établissait un avis de clôture de bornage que l'on faisait apparaître au journal officiel, avant de renvoyer le dossier au service principal des domaines³³⁹. En cas de non-opposition quelconque, il était précédé, dans les trente jours, à l'immatriculation³⁴⁰.

Dans cet itinéraire du dossier, il est possible que les chefs traditionnels puissent effectivement signifier leur influence soit lors de L'information du public par le préfet, soit au cours des travaux au sein de la commission consultative, ou même lors du bornage qui exige la présence des voisins. Dans ce dernier cas, les dossiers n'atteindraient pas souvent la direction des domaines. On comprendrait, des lors, pourquoi l'autorité administrative locale serait interpellée par les immigres Eton-Manguissa qui accusaient les chefs traditionnels d'obstruction à l'acquisition du titre foncier.

Le problème de la non-délivrance des titres fonciers aux allogènes de l'arrondissement de Mbangassina reste et demeure, pour certains, Le catalyseur principal des conflits fonciers, et pour d'autres, Le seul moyen de détendre Le restant du patrimoine foncier à leur disposition. Un blocus se dessine donc ace niveau. En réalité, la stratégie adoptée par les chefs traditionnels ossananga vise entreprendre au préalable des enquêtes avec pour finalité de connaître le moyen utilise par le postulant pour acquérir Le terrain concerne.³⁴¹ Le résultat auquel ils aboutissent généralement étant celui d'une acquisition à vil prix, les chefs ossananga optent alors purement et simplement pour le blocage des dossiers. De tels agissements des Ossananga incitent les Eton-Manguissa à la colère. A ce propos, notre informateur Luc Nko Noa, un Eton, lance un cri d'alarme que l'on pourrait même assimiler à un avertissement, une véritable menace. L'administration gagnerait à

³³⁸ Tientcheu Njiako, Droits réels, p.89.

³³⁹Ibid., pp. 297-298,

³⁴⁰Ibid. 298 Les modifications du 16 décembre 2005 concernent surtout les délais d'acheminement des dossiers, elles raccourcissent certes certaines étapes, mais laissent intacte L'implication des chefs de village. 37 Entretien avec Nko Noa.

³⁴¹ Idem.

prendre au sérieux ses paroles, afin de prévenir un éventuel embrasement dans cette localité sensible du Cameroun. Luc Nko Noa affirme en effet que:

Les Ossananga et les Eton-Manguissa se regardent encore en chien de faïence. Le piège tendu est l'établissement des titres fonciers. Les Ossananga ont été tellement bêtes qu'ils ont parfois vendu même les terres abritant les tombes de leurs ancêtres. Pour que la paix perdure, il faudrait que nous autres Eton-Manguissa soyons assez souples et évitons toujours de riposter aux manœuvres provocatrices des Ossananga: - Or, la souplesse et la tolérance ne sont pas toujours nos qualités.³⁴²

A travers de telles déclarations, l'on constate qu'un véritable danger plane au-dessus de la localité, une sorte de bombe retardement vise Mbangassina. Si donc le piège tendu est l'établissement des titres fonciers comme l'affirme notre informateur, il faudrait que les autorités qui en ont la charge sachent à quoi s'en tenir. Mbangassina s'impose comme un espace où la prévention est de mise.

Il faudrait cependant dire que la solution préconisée par les immigrés Eton-Manguissa suscite quelques interrogations. Comment penser en effet que les chefs traditionnels, gardiens de l'héritage ancestral des villages concernés, soient exclus de la tenue des palabres devant aboutir à l'attribution des titres fonciers sur des terres dont ils jouissent de la paternité? Comment penser que l'Ossananga puisse être écarté complètement des décisions concernant le devenir de ses terres ancestrales? Lorsqu'on connaît la valeur non seulement économique mais surtout spirituelle de la terre ancestrale³⁴³, l'on ne peut que se

³⁴²Idem.

³⁴³ La terre a une grande valeur traditionnelle religieuse en Afrique en général et au Cameroun en particulier, car considérée comme lieu de résidence des divinités et lieu où reposent les ancêtres très présents dans les croyances africaines. Ceci fait des terres ancestrales des véritables lieux de culte, Pour plus de détails. Lire Dong Mougnol, « Dynamiques foncières au Cameroun : de la cohabitation forcée au divorce », in

laisser convaincre par l'évidence selon laquelle vouloir effacer les autochtones de ce processus reviendrait à enflammer la localité.

La force n'ayant jamais résolu ce genre de problème, l'autorité administrative se doit de bien comprendre que laisser perdurer ce climat de flou équivaldrait à sa participation à l'enracinement d'un mal susceptible de dégrader le climat social. Il lui serait plutôt bénéfique de savoir exploiter actuellement certaines convergences de points de vue à l'instar du fait que l'Ossananga, tout comme l'Eton ou Le Manguissa, sont conscients qu'il n'est plus question de chasser qui que ce soit; la cohabitation étant pour les deux camps un acquis à préserver.

L'Etat se trouve certes dans une position assez délicate, mais celle-ci ne saurait justifier une quelconque démission. Il a un rôle qui exige de lui, qu'en même temps qu'il préserve, protège les terres ancestrales des groupes autochtones, comme il transparaît dans la constitution de 1996, qu'il précède aussi à la règlementation de la conquête des terres par les allogènes, ainsi qu'à l'arbitrage des litiges fonciers parfois très complexes.

Dans ces conditions difficiles, il serait bon que l'Etat se réserve d'attribuer, de façon précipitée, des titres fonciers aux allogènes sur les terres non exploitées. Il est préférable que celles-ci soient reprises et judicieusement redistribuées; avec une priorité à accorder aux autochtones. La condition à imposer aux acquéreurs serait le retrait immédiat de ces terrains au cas où ils n'étaient pas mis en valeur. En réalité, ces conquêtes foncières non suivies d'une exploitation des terres ressemblent à une œuvre d'égoïstes, grandement préjudiciable à l'économie nationale.

Conclusion

L'analyse des propositions de solutions émises par les différentes communautés, principaux protagonistes des conflits fonciers issus des migrations vers les localités de Mbangassina et Makenene, laisse transparaître un certain souci guidé essentiellement par la volonté de camoufler soi-même ses propres responsabilités et de n'exposer que

ceux de l'adversaire. Une telle attitude n'a pas toujours favorisé une cohabitation intercommunautaire paisible. La collecte de diverses réflexions émises par les protagonistes de ces conflits fonciers a cependant un objectif majeur. Elles peuvent en effet constituer une base de données qui intéresserait le décideur, c'est-à-dire, l'Etat, dont le rôle est d'assurer la paix des citoyens.

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Les autorités camerounaises et la gestion des regroupements identitaires: Problématique de frontière entre l'Homme-tribal et l'Homme-nation au Cameroun après l'indépendance et la réunification (1960-2005)

By

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Résumé

Au lendemain de L'indépendance du Cameroun français, survenue le 1er janvier 1960, les responsables de l'Union Camerounaise (UC), Le parti du chef de l'Etat, engagèrent un combat sans relâche contre les autres forces politiques ayant participé à la lutte contre l'administration coloniale. L'objectif vise était d'instituer au Cameroun un régime de parti unique. Dans ce combat, les regroupements identitaires furent aussi les cibles privilégiées des dignitaires et des caciques du parti majoritaire à l'assemblée nationale. Entre 1960 et 1966, on assista ainsi à la disparition progressivement de ces regroupements ethno régionaux. Seul Le *Ngondo*, l'assemblée duala, parvint à résister aux forces monolithiques du pouvoir central de Yaoundé jusqu'en 1980, année où il fut lui aussi contraint de mettre fin à ses activités. Les doctrinaires de L'UC, devenue l'Union Nationale Camerounaise (UNC) en 1966, accusaient les regroupements identitaires d'être des obstacles à l'unité nationale, l'un des leitmotivs des discours officiels du président Ahmadou Barbotora Ahidjo. Mais depuis 1991, ces regroupements sont revenus sur la scène camerounaise et mènent leurs activités sans pour autant que l'unité nationale pour laquelle ils ont été combattus ne soit en aucun cas en péril. A l'aide de sources multiples, cette analyse a pour objectif de montrer que les dignitaires de L'UNC n'ont pas été capables de définir la frontière entre l'Homme-tribal et l'Homme-nation et que les deux, loin d'être des entités antagonistes,

sont appelés à aller dans la même direction sans pour autant que l'unité nationale soit menacée dans un pays.

Mots clés: Regroupement identitaires, Homme-tribal, Homme-nation, Unité nationale, Régime monolithique.

Abstract

At the event of Independence on French Cameroon which took effect on the 1st January 1960, the leaders of Cameroonian Union (CU), the head of State party's, engaged in a serious battle against the political rivals who took part on the struggle against colonial administration. The main objective was geared at instituting a unique party in Cameroun. In this struggle, identified group were however at the base to be given the privileged and dignities coupled with the party that largely represented at the national assembly. Between 1960 and 1966, we noticed progressively the reluctance of these ethno regional groupings. Only the Ngondo, a Duala grouping was able to resist the monolithic forces of the centralized power of Yaoundé till 1980, the year which unmasked activities. The CU doctrines, which were later transformed to the Cameroonian National Union (CNU) in 1966, branded these ethnic grouping the base of strutting nation union on the official priorities of Ahmadou Babatoro Ahidjo's regime. But since 1991, these grouping have come back in existence in the Cameroonian context. They undergo their activities while embarking views on issues related to those of the national unity as earlier advocate. With the aid of various sources, we are able to understand that, the dignitaries of GUN was not to establish a frontiers between the tribalism which illustrate the dynamic ethnic regional and national unity that constituted the desire of the different ethno regional grouping to live in a single and same State. Despite their differences in ideologies and cultural framework, the tribal-man which the composing of a Nation-man both are to cohabit and to work in the same direction so as achieve their objectives.

Key Words: Identified grouping, Tribal-man, Nation-man, National

unify, Monolithic regime.

Introduction

Le Cameroun français a connu une vie sociale et politique très mouvementée après la seconde guerre mondiale. De nombreuses organisations sont apparues sur la scène pour exprimer leurs revendications, les uns sur le plan politique, les autres sur le plan syndical et même sur le plan socioculturel. Toutes ces forces contribuèrent, d'une manière générale, à l'évolution du territoire et marquèrent d'une empreinte indélébile Le combat nationaliste qui aboutit finalement à l'indépendance et à la réunification. Mais au lendemain du départ de L'administration coloniale, et la prise des destinées du pays par ses propres fils, la liberté d'action accordée à toutes ces associations par le colonisateur commença à être menacée. La roublardise des nouvelles autorités, les tracasseries policières et la signature, par Le chef de l'Etat lui-même, d'un certain nombre de textes vicieux, à l'instar des ordonnances de 1962³⁴⁴, finirent par avoir raison des activités des toutes ces associations et partis politiques qui animaient la scène camerounaise depuis l'après-guerre.

La disparition de ces associations était liée à la ferme volonté du chef de l'Etat d'en finir avec Le pluralisme politique et d'instaurer au Cameroun Le système de parti unique, à la mode dans la grande majorité des Etats de l'Afrique noire d'expression française, Dans ce combat contre les forces politiques concurrentes, les regroupements identitaires, instruments de revalorisation de la tribalité et de la dynamique ethno régionale, ne furent pas épargnés. Les autorités de Yaoundé ne manquèrent pas de les considérer comme des obstacles à l'unité nationale, le leitmotiv des discours politique du premier chef de l'Etat du Cameroun dont la pensée politique était obsessionnellement monolithique³⁴⁵. Pour les autres, c'est-à-dire les caciques et les

³⁴⁴ J. P. Fogui, L'intégration politique au Cameroun. Une analyse centre-périphérie, Paris, Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1991, p. 246.

³⁴⁵ A. Ahidjo, Contribution à la construction nationale, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1964, p. 29.

thuriféraires de l'UC, il n'y avait pas de compatibilité entre l'Homme-tribal et L'Homme-nation; par conséquent, il fallait à tout prix tuer le premier pour que l'unité se forge entre les Camerounais.

Ainsi, dans la vision des autorités postcoloniales, la nation camerounaise ne pouvait se faire ni dans le contexte de pluralisme politique, ni dans la logique de la dynamique ethno régionale. Cet acharnement contre Le pluralisme et la dynamique ethno régionale par les responsables de l'UC nous amené donc aune interrogation capitale, à savoir: la dynamique ethno régionale est-elle réellement incompatible avec l'émergence d'une Nation comme les responsables de l'UC ont voulu le faire croire au lendemain de l'indépendance? Pour cela, répondre à cette préoccupation, nous analysons 'action des regroupements identitaires dans leurs fiefs respectifs et voir si la vole empruntée par les autorités était réellement guidée par les objectifs de l'unité nationale.

A. La dynamique identitaire au Cameroun au moment de L'indépendance et de la réunification

Selon *Dicos Encarta*³⁴⁶, le terme regroupement peut littéralement avoir plusieurs significations. D'une part, il peut signifier le fait, pour des choses ou des personnes, d'être rassemblé dans une même cadre précis. D'autre part, il peut être défini comme l'action de réunir ou de remettre ensemble des personnes ou des éléments disperses et de même nature³⁴⁷. Quant au mot Identitaire, et toujours selon Le même dictionnaire, c'est en fait un adjectif qualificatif qui renvoie au sentiment d'appartenance à un groupe ou aune communauté (humaine) spécifique³⁴⁸.

Le terme regroupement identitaire renvoie donc aux rassemblements d'individus sur la base d'un certain nombre d'affinités,

³⁴⁶ C'est le dictionnaire informatique incorpore de l'encyclopédie numérique Encarta, Logiciel conçu et vendu par la firme multinationale Microsoft.

³⁴⁷ Dicos Encarta, édition 2009, Microsoft Corporation

³⁴⁸ Ibid. 84 Après avoir snobe les regroupements identitaires sous la présidence d'Ahidjo, le Cameroun a tin par les rejoindre sous le règne de Biya, passant ainsi de la diplomatie de la chaise vide a la diplomatie de présence

qui peuvent être soit religieuses, linguistiques, historiques ou ethno régionale et dont L'audience varie d'un lieu à un autre. Certains, à L'instar du Commonwealth, de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) et de l'Organisation de la Conférence Islamique (OCI) dont fait partie le Cameroun³⁴⁹, ont une audience internationale. Mais la plupart des regroupements identitaires ont une influence régionale, voire cantonale. Sur le plan national, Le concept désigne les organisations ethno régionales, et même parfois tribales, qui sont apparues (ou réapparues) au Cameroun après la seconde guerre mondiale et dont les objectifs statutaires mettaient en exergue les activités sociales, culturelles et coutumières. Les autorités coloniales les désignaient sous de nombreuses appellations. Ainsi, dans certains rapports administratifs, il était question d' « Associations traditionnelles » et, dans d'autres, on parlait d'Associations tribales ».

La constitution française de 1946, qui donna naissance à la IV^e République, rendit possible L'émergence et la prolifération des regroupements identitaires. En devenant membre de l'Union Française (UF), avec le statut officiel de "Territoire associé"³⁵⁰, le Cameroun français commença bénéficier de certains avantages jusque-là inexistants. C'est le cas de l'envoi de ses représentants dans les différentes institutions métropolitaines³⁵¹ et de certaines libertés, à l'instar de celles relatives à la création des partis politiques et des associations d'ordre mutuel, catégorie où l'on range aisément les regroupements identitaires. Ces derniers se distinguaient des organisations syndicales et des partis politiques au niveau de L'audience, des objectifs à atteindre et des normes d'adhésion des membres.

S'agissant de l'audience territoriale, celle des regroupements

84 Après avoir snobé les regroupements identitaires sous la présidence d'Ahidjo, le Cameroun a fini par les rejoindre sous le règne de Biya, passant ainsi de la diplomatie de la chaise vide à la diplomatie de présence

³⁵⁰ A. Eyinga, Introduction à la politique camerounaise, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1984, pp. 15-20.

³⁵¹ Il s'agissait du Sénat, de l'Assemblée Nationale (AN), du Conseil Economique (CE) et de l'Assemblée de l'Union Française (AUF).

identitaires dépassait à peine les limites d'un ou de deux unités administratives. Seuls quelques-uns étaient parvenus à sortir de leurs fiefs régionaux à travers 'installation des sections dans les grandes villes du Sud de l'Adamaoua, particulièrement à Douala et à Yaoundé. De ce point de vue, nous pouvons dire que les regroupements identitaires justifiaient bien l'appellation d'associations régionales utilisée par les autorités françaises pendant la période de tutelle pour les designers³⁵².

Quant aux objectifs à atteindre, ou du moins les objectifs avoués, la lecture des statuts déposés dans les différents chefs-lieux des régions auprès des autorités administratives montre que ceux-ci étaient strictement d'ordre social, coutumier et culturel:

- sur le plan social, les regroupements identitaires se proposaient de rassembler les groupes tribaux et ethniques, voire ethno régionaux, c'est-à-dire des peuples proches atout point de vue, pour renforcer en eux l'esprit de solidarité et d'entraide ;
- au niveau de la coutume, chaque regroupement entendait évidemment codifier et réadapter les coutumes ancestrales, conformément à l'esprit des lois de l'Union Française (UF) ;
- sur le plan culturel, les regroupements identitaires mettaient en exergue la revalorisation
- des valeurs culturelles d'antan, malmenées par les apports extérieurs depuis la rencontre avec l'Occident et, surtout, L'installation des administrations coloniales et des missions chrétiennes,

Pour ce qui est des normes d'adhésion, les regroupements identitaires ne prenaient en compte que les liens de sang et, parfois, les affinités ethno régionales. Bien qu'il y ait eu quelques cas d'adhésion de ressortissants allogènes, c'est-à-dire des Camerounais venant des autres unités administratives et vivant dans le fief de regroupement concerne, il s'agissait cependant des actes symboliques montrant qu'il existait dans l'ensemble de bonnes relations avec les autochtones. L'exemple le plus illustratif était celui de *L'Efulameyõn* qui, lors de son congrès annuel tenu A Mengomo en 1953, accepta l'adhésion des membres de

³⁵²ANY, 3AC 246, Associations declarees, 1956.

la communauté du Grand-Nord vivant à Ambam et communément appelés “Haoussa”³⁵³

En 1957, après une longue période d'autisme ou chaque regroupement identitaire évoluait dans son fief, quatre d'entre eux, en L'occurrence Le *Kolo-Beti*, le *Ngondo*, Le *Kvasio* et l'*Efulameyoñ* se retrouvèrent A Yaoundé sur invitation de Philippe Mbarga Manga, notable ewondo et président général du *Kolo-Beti*. Cette réunion aboutit à la création de l'Union des Associations Traditionnelles du Cameroun (UNATRACAM)³⁵⁴, une coordination dont L'objectif était, entre autres, d'amener les différents regroupements identitaires qui animaient la scène sociale au Cameroun français de “parler d'une seule voix pour tous les sujets concernant le Cameroun”³⁵⁵.

Ainsi, au moment de l'indépendance, de nombreux regroupements identitaires animaient la scène sociale et politique au Cameroun français, Nous pouvons citer entre autres:

-Le *Koupe* : crée A Nkongsamba en 1950 par Jean Kwélé, il évoluait dans la région du Moungo ou il s'attela à rassembler les groupes autochtones victimes, non seulement des influences néfastes de la culture occidentale³⁵⁶, mais aussi de la spoliation foncière des Blancs et de l'arrivée massive des autres camerounais des régions des Grassfields et du Centre ;

-Le *Kumze*: il fut lancé au mois de mars 1948 à Dschang par Mathias Djoumessi, le Fade Foreke-Dschang, dans la région bamiléké, avec pour objectifs Le rassemblement des Bamiléké, la préservation de la coutume' et la revalorisation des valeurs culturelles des peuples de l'Ouest-Cameroun³⁵⁷;

-l'*Anagsama-Lessomolo* : créée en 1956 à Obala, alors subdivision de la région du Nyong et Sanaga, l'*Anagsama-Lessomolo* était dirigée par Joseph Ngoumou et s'attela à rassembler les Eton, Manguissa et les

³⁵³ANY, 3AC 3239, Mengomo, congrès tribal (17-20 fév, 1953).

³⁵⁴ANY, APA 1040, UNATRACAM, 1957.

³⁵⁵ANY, 3AC 3364, UNATRACAM, 1957-1958.

³⁵⁶ANY, 2AC3607, Association Koupe, Activités 1950-1953.

³⁵⁷ANY, APA 1627, Kumze, Statuts, 1949.

Batchenga pour cultiver en eux l'entente, l'entraide, la solidarité d'une part et pour la revalorisation de leurs patrimoine culturelle d'autre part³⁵⁸:

-Le *Kolo-Beti*: tout comme l'*Anagsama-Lessomolo*, l'Union Fraternelle et Traditionnelle du *Kolo-Beti* (UFTKO), plus connue sous son diminutif de *Kolo-Beti*, fut lancée en 1956 à Yaoundé dans la région du Nyong et Sanaga par les notables ewondo sous la houlette de Philippe Mbarga Manga. Les objectifs étaient Le resserrement des liens de parents entre les *Kolo-Beti*, la revalorisation des cultures et des traditions bété et, enfin, le développement de l'esprit de solidarité entre les groupes tribaux de ce sous ensemble³⁵⁹;

- le *Marata* : il a vu le jour en 1953, dans le sillage de Charles René Guy Okala, le leader du Parti Socialiste Camerounais (PSC) et ancien sénateur, L'objectif avoué était de rassembler tous les peuples bantous de la vaste région administrative du Mbam pour cultiver en eux L'esprit de solidarité et en vue de la protection de leurs coutumes;

- l'Union Bamoun (UNIBA) : elle fut créée en juin 1948 à Foumban à l'initiative personnelle du sultan des Bamoun, EI Hadj Njimoluh Seidou Njoya, avec le soutien d'Arouna Njoya, sénateur et conseiller à l'Assemblée Législative du Cameroun (ARCAM)³⁶⁰. Comme son nom l'indique, l'UNIBA devait aboutir à l'union de tous les Bamoun et à la préservation de leur riche patrimoine culturelle. En 1955, l'UNIBA a changé de dénomination pour dévenir l'Assemblée Traditionnelle du Peuple Bamoun (ATPB)³⁶¹;

- le *Kwasio*: c'est à l'initiative de Christophe Ngouah Nkoulet, planteur et menuisier Bidjouka, village ngoumba de la subdivision de Lolodorf dans la région administrative de Kribi, que la Société de Condolérance *Kwasio* (SOCOK) fut créée en novembre 1953. Les objectifs de la SOCOK tournaient autour de la connaissance de

³⁵⁸ ANY, APA 243, Région du Nyong et Sanaga, Rapport de tournées, 1956-1957.

³⁵⁹ANY, 3AC 366, Kolo6Beti, 1956.

³⁶⁰ANY, 3AC 3524, Union Bamoun (UNIBA), 1948.

³⁶¹ ANY, 2AC 107, Assemblée Traditionnelle du Peuple Bamoun, 1955.

l'histoire des *Kwasio*³⁶², la revalorisation des coutumes en “vole de disparition” et le développement de L'esprit de solidarité. En 1956, la SOCOK changea de dénomination en devint l'Association *Kwasio*, ou en diminutif *Kwasio* ;

- *l'Efulameyoñ*: c'est en décembre 1948 que les dirigeants des associations claniques du grand ensemble *ekang* (fang-béti-boulou) des régions administratives du N'tem et de Kribi³⁶³ se sont retrouvés à Ndengue, village de la subdivision d'Ebolowa, a l'initiative de Daniel Awong Ango, pour créer une fédération tribale, l'Union Tribale N'tem-Kribi (UTNK), plus connue sous son appellation bulu *d'Efulameyoñ* (rassemblement des tribus)³⁶⁴. Les objectifs de *l'Efulameyoñ* étaient d'aboutir à l'union des Fang-Béti-Bulu des régions administratives du Ntem et de Kribi, à la défense de leurs intérêts économiques, a la renaissance culturelle, morale et intellectuelle de leur société et a l'établissement des relations étroites avec L'administration de tutelle³⁶⁵. En 1953, au congrès de Mengomo, *l'Efulameyoñ* change son appellation française et devint l'Union Traditionnelle Bantoue (UTB). C'était à la suite de L'éclatement en 1951 de la vaste région du Ntem en deux unités administratives distinctes: la région du Ntem et la

³⁶² Le mot *Kwasio* désigné trois groupes tribaux de la région kribienne, en l'occurrence les Ngoumba, les Mabea et les Pflébouri. Ces groupes font partie du même univers culturel que les Maka de l'Est-Cameroun. Pour d'amples informations, lire J.P. Ombolo, “Essai sur l'histoire, les clans et les regroupements classiques des Eton du Cameroun; une étude de la structure clanique des Eton accompagnée d'une présentation anthropologique générale du cadre ethnico-culturel : la société globale fang-béti-boulou (groupe dit pahouin)”, Yaoundé, 1989, p. 25.

³⁶³ Les anciennes régions administratives du N'tem et de Kribi forment l'actuelle Région du Sud. Si la région de Kribi, actuelle département de l'Océan, n'a pas subi de modification, la région du N'tem par contre à éclater depuis en donnant naissance aux départements du Dja et Lobo (chef-lieu Sangmélina), de la Vallée du Ntem chef-lieu Ambam), et de la Mvila (chef-lieu Ebolowa).

³⁶⁴ ANY, 2 AC j8, Etude sur l'Union Tribale Ntem-Kribi (UTNK), 1948.

³⁶⁵ ANY, 2 AC 3681, Union Tribale Ntem-Kribi (UTNK), statuts, 1949

région du Dja et Lobo³⁶⁶. Jusqu'en 1956, les activités de l'*Efulameyong* restèrent cantonnées dans son fief du Sud-Cameroun, mais par la suite, l'association se rapprocha des autres regroupements identitaires et joua un rôle politique non négligeable dans la dernière phase de l'évolution du Cameroun à la veille de l'indépendance³⁶⁷;

- le *Ngondo*: c'est sans aucun doute la plus ancienne des regroupements identitaires au Cameroun³⁶⁸, Son origine remonte probablement au début du XVIIIème siècle, à l'époque où les Duala venaient juste de s'installer sur les berges du Wouri. Pendant la période allemande, le *Ngondo* joua un rôle primordial dans la régulation de la société duala ainsi qu'au niveau des échanges commerciaux avec les Européens³⁶⁹. Certains auteurs, à l'instar de Nyounae Libam, affirment que cette assemblée fut l'instrument majeur des traites signés au mois de juillet 1884 entre les chefs duala et les représentants des firmes commerciales allemandes, Woermann, Jantzen & Thormalhen³⁷⁰. Mais, une fois l'euphorie de ces traites passés, le conflit éclata entre les Duala et les forces coloniales du 2ème Reich à propos des expropriations³⁷¹. Le *Ngondo* mandata Rudolf Douala Manga Bell pour être Le porte-parole de la communauté et fut L'instrument de sa cohésion lors de ce conflit, ce qui lui attira l'hostilité de Von Rohn, Le chef du district

³⁶⁶ ANY, 3AC 3239, Mengomo (Cameroun), congrès tribal, 1953.

³⁶⁷ R. K. Kpwang "Les associations régionales à caractère traditionnel et l'évolution sociopolitique du Cameroun; le cas de l'Union Tribale Ntem-Kribi (UTNK) ou Efulameyong, des origines à 1966", Thèse de doctorat s= cycle en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 1997, pp. 284-291.

³⁶⁸ L. Mourné Etia, Cameroun les années ardentes. Aux origines de la vie syndicale et politique, Paris, JAPRESS, 1991 (avec la collaboration de Philippe Gaillard), p. 86.

³⁶⁹ M. Doumbe Mouloungou, Le Ngondo, assemblée traditionnelle du peuple duala, Yaoundé, CEPMAE, 1971, pp. 15- 16.

³⁷⁰ J.-P. Nyounae Libam, Le traité duala-allemand du 12 juillet 1884, Paris, Publications du Centre National de Recherches Scientifiques (CNRS), 1975, 2^{ème} édition, pp. 27-29.

³⁷¹ I. Kala-Lobe, Douala Manga Bell, héros de la résistance duala, Paris, ABC, 1977, p. 72.

allemand de Douala³⁷². En fin de compte, L'administrateur impérial finit par interdire le *Ngondo*. Les autorités françaises, après le partage du Cameroun en 1916, décidèrent également de maintenir cette interdiction, connaissant les problèmes que Le *Ngondo* a eu apposés à l'ancienne puissance coloniale. Finalement, en 1947, le *Ngondo* profita des lois de l'Union Française pour revenir sur les devants de la scène suite à l'action des évolués duala, anciens militants du mouvement germanophile *Kamerun Eingeboren Deutsch Gesinten Verein* (KEDGV)³⁷³. Ce retour de l'assemblée duala sur la scène nationale se fit avec grand écho et suscita des émules dans tout le Sud de l'Adamaoua. C'est ce qui conduisit à la prolifération des regroupements identitaires dans les autres unités administratives, en commençant par la région bamiléké, suivie de la région bamoun et, en 1948, les régions administratives du N'tem et de Kribi.

Tous ces regroupements identitaires ont marqué la scène camerounaise d'une façon indélébile, à travers leurs actions de rassemblement des populations culturellement proches, de revalorisation culturelle, et même de solidarité et de cohésion régionales. Mais, les regroupements l'identitaires ne se sont pas contentés de jouer un rôle social et culturel. Ils ont également servi de tremplins aux leaders politiques comme Le reconnaît si bien le R.P. Mveng:

La population rurale reste donc, en grande partie, Le facteur déterminant, aussi L'importance des associations traditionnelles est-elle réelle. Les partis les plus stables sont peut-être, dans les débuts, ceux qui s'appuient sur elles...

Le Kumze en pays Bamiléké, l'Union Tribale Ntem-Kribi (Efoulan-Meyong) en pays boulou. Le Kolo-Beti dans le Nyong et Sanaga, l'Assemblée traditionnelle du Peuple Bamoun à Foumban, exercent une influence qu'il ne faut pas minimiser. Au moment des élections, leurs voix sont d'autant plus décisives que toutes ces

³⁷²Ibid.

³⁷³ANY, 3AC 3364, UNATRACAM, 1957-1958.

associations sont fortement implantées dans la ville³⁷⁴.

Au moment où la question du débat sur le Cameroun a commencé à se poser avec acuité, les regroupements identitaires se sont arrangés pour aller à l'ONU. Les collectes de fonds organisées dans les unités administratives permirent à certains d'être présents à New-York. Parmi ces pétitionnaires, on retrouvait, entre autres, le chef Ernest Betote Akwa pour le *Ngondo*, Paul Biba bi Ngota pour l'*Efulameyoñ*, tous deux aux cotes du camp du 1er ministre Ahmadou Ahidjo, le protégé de la France coloniale ; Germain Tsala Mekongo pour l'*Anagsama-Lessomolo*, Philippe Mbarga Manga pour le *Kolo-Beti*, aux cotes du camp nationaliste dont le chef de file était le leader de l'Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), le Dr Felix Roland Moumié, partisan de l'amnistie générale, de l'élaboration de la constitution et de l'organisation des élections générales sous le contrôle de l'ONU avant la levée de la Tutelle³⁷⁵.

B. Les autorités du jeune Etat du Cameroun face à la dynamique ethno régionale Incarnée par les regroupements identitaires

Au lendemain de l'élection d'Ahmadou Ahidjo à la présidence de la République du Cameroun le 5 mai 1960, son parti s'est lancé dans une politique d'élimination systématique des autres formations rivales. L'un des caciques de l'UC, Samuel Kame, n'hésita d'ailleurs pas à proclamer haut que l'UC ne devait pas hésiter à recourir aux méthodes fascistes pour s'imposer³⁷⁶.

Les responsables de l'UC commencèrent à recourir à toutes sortes de subterfuges pour obliger les Camerounais à adhérer à leur formation. La recherche de travail pour les masses et des postes de responsabilités pour les leaders politiques amenèrent de nombreux

³⁷⁴ E. Mveng, Histoire du Cameroun, Yaoundé, CEPER, 1985, Tome II, p. 192.

³⁷⁵ J.-B. Alima, Sur les chemins de l'unité. Comment se forge une nation. Le cas du Cameroun, Paris, ABC, 1977, p. 73-75.

³⁷⁶ Lire à cet effet, J.-F. Bayart, L'Etat au Cameroun, Paris, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1984.

citoyens³⁷⁷ à adhérer à l'UC, grossissant ainsi les rangs de ce parti. Ce dernier se transforma en une sorte d'"office d'embauche", selon l'expression qu'aurait employé Moussa Yaya Sarkifada, le secrétaire général de l'UC³⁷⁸. Ainsi, au pluralisme de l'ère coloniale, succéda une scène politique qui ressemblait de plus en plus à un cirque OU, pour être dans les bonnes grâces du pouvoir en général et des dignitaires de L'UC en particulier, de nombreux Camerounais n'hésitèrent pas à se rendre directement à la Radio-Yaoundé ou à Radio-Douala pour annoncer leur adhésion à l'UC³⁷⁹.

Pour briser la résistance des Camerounais qui ne voulaient pas cautionner cette politique qui allait conduire le pays dans le système de parti unique, et nimber la politique de son parti en lui donnant les allures de noblesse, le chef de l'Etat fit miroiter le mirage de l'Unité nationale. Ainsi, lors du 38^{me} congrès de l'UC tenu du 22 au 25 septembre 1960 à Maroua, Le président Ahmadou Barbotin Ahidjo lança l'appel pour la constitution au Cameroun d'un "grand parti national unifié"³⁸⁰. Ainsi, sous prétexte de répondre à cet appel, L'on vit de nombreux leaders dissoudre leurs partis pour adhérer à l'UC, avec naturellement l'espoir de s'arroger ou de conserver quelques postes³⁸¹

³⁷⁷ C'était à la fois par réalisme et par l'appât des postes car, adhérer à l'UC permettait, non seulement d'éviter les problèmes et les tracasseries de toutes sortes, mais aussi d'avoir l'espoir d'en tirer largement profit en glanant un poste de responsabilité important, même si, parfois, la présence dans les nouvelles responsabilités était éphémère comme ce fut le cas avec l'Upeciste Eugene Wonyu qui, après son ralliement au régime, réussit à se faire nommer au poste de ministre de l'information. Mais il fut relevé de ses fonctions un mois après sans qu'il sache pourquoi et surtout quelle faute il avait commise. Pour d'amples explications, lire E. Wonyu, *De l'UPC à l'UC. Témoignage à l'aube de l'indépendance*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1986.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 91-92.

³⁷⁹ Entretien avec Jeremie Angounou Mvele, 91 ans, notable ngoue, Ebolowa, 10 février 2011.

³⁸⁰ P. Gaillard, *Le Cameroun*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989, Tome II, p. 37.

³⁸¹ Pour d'amples informations, lire J.-M. Zang Atangana, *Les forces politiques au Cameroun réunifié. Tome II. L'expérience de L'UC et du KNDP*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989, pp. 72-73.

ou ils allaient se sucrer.

L'un des exemples les plus illustratifs est venu du Sud-Cameroun, précisément d'Ebolowa, où Charles Assa 'ale Mbiam, pour conserver son poste de 1er ministre chef du gouvernement, procéda en septembre 1962 à la dissolution du Mouvement d'Action Nationale du Cameroun (MANC), sans l'accord et encore moins la présence, des responsables des fédérations de Kribi, du Wouri, du Nkam, et du Mounjo³⁸². Aloys Ntonga Sekambo, l'un des ténors de l'ancien "Groupe des Huit"³⁸³, et président de la fédération MANC de Kribi, qualifia cet acte de "Hold-up politique".

De même, toujours dans la logique de la caution à la politique de prébende de L'UC camouflée sous Le pathos de l'unité nationale, l'un des animateurs de la scène politique à Yaoundé, le pharmacien *upéciste* Emah Ottou Higgins Pierre Philippe William, signa un "chèque à blanc" au président Ahmadou Babatora Ahidjo³⁸⁴.

Mais, s'il est vrai que la politique de prébendes de "UC attira de nombreux Camerounais, particulièrement les leaders politiques et les militants de leurs formations, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai que tous ne tombèrent pas dans le piège des mots, car sous le vocable de "grand parti national unifié" souhaite par le chef de "Etat au cours d'une conférence de presse à Yaoundé le 11 novembre 1961"³⁸⁵, se cachait en fait la ferme volonté d'instaurer un régime de parti unique au Cameroun, en commençant par l'Etat fédéré du Cameroun oriental. C'est Le cas des quatre parlementaires et leaders du Parti des

³⁸² C'est dans la banlieue de la ville d'Ebolowa, à Azem-Essakoe, villages situés à 5 kilomètres de centre-ville, que se tint ce congrès qui, en fin de compte, ne comprenait que les représentants de la fédération MANC du Ntem.

³⁸³ Le "Groupe des Huit" «Stait Le groupe parlementaire constitués par les huit députés du MANC à l'Assemblée législative du Cameroun. Il «Stait composé de Paul Soppo Priso et Ernest Betoté Akwa (Wouri), Hans Dissaké (Nkam), Gaston Behle Lembe et Jean Ekwabi Bwane (Moungo), Aloys Ntonga Bekambo (Kribi) et François Obam Ella et Charles Assa'ale Mbiam (Ntem).

³⁸⁴ Lire à cet effet J.M. Zang Atangana, Les forces politiques au Cameroun réuni, Tome II, L'expérience de L'UC du KNDP, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989.

³⁸⁵ P. Gaillard, Le Cameroun, p. 37.

Démocrates Camerounais (POC), du Parti Socialiste Camerounais (PSC), de L'UPC et du Parti Travailleiste Camerounais (PTC), respectivement André-Marie Mbida, Charles René Guy Okala, Theodore Mayi Matip ma Ndombol et Le Dr Marcel Sebey Eyidi qui refusèrent de saborder leurs formations et rejoindre l'UC comme le voulaient le chef de l'Etat et les caciques de son parti. Pour sauver le pluralisme en péril dans le pays, ils constituèrent le 16 juin 1962 le Front National Unifié (FNU) 'entre leurs partis et un groupe parlementaire commun à l'assemblée législative.

Lorsque le 23 juin du même mois les quatre leaders publièrent un manifeste connu sous l'appellation de "Manifeste du FNU" dans lequel ils critiquèrent la politique des responsables de l'UC qui, selon les auteurs, voilaient instaurer au Cameroun une "dictature de type fasciste"³⁸⁶, la réaction du président Barbatoro Ahidjo et de ses fidèles ne se fit pas attendre: ils furent inculpés de menées subversives, arrêtés, traduits devant le tribunal et condamnés le 11 juillet 1962 chacun a deux ans et demi de prison et a250000 FCFA d'amande³⁸⁷.

Pour obtenir leur condamnation, le chef de l'Etat se servit de l'ordonnance *n°06210F/18* signée le 18 mars 1962 dans le cadre de la lutte contre la subversion et dont le contenu était révélateur des réelles intentions de son signataire. Le chef de l'Etat voulait tout simplement museler toute velléité de contestation et d'opposition au régime. L'article 2 de cette ordonnance est sans équivoque comme atteste son contenu reproduit ci-dessous:

Quiconque aura, par quelques moyens que ce soit, porte atteinte au respect dû aux Etats fédérés ou participe aune entreprise de subversion dirigée contre les autorités et les lois de la dite république ou des Etats fédères ou encourage cette subversion sera puni d'un emprisonnement d'un a cinq ans et d'une amende

³⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 39-40.

³⁸⁷ Lorsque les quatre parlementaires firent appel, Le tribunal durcit leur peine, en la portant trois 80S d'emprisonnement et à 500.000 FCFA.

de 200000 a2000000 millions de francs³⁸⁸.

La rigueur de ces peines infligées aux leaders du FNU fut ressentie comme un avertissement par les hommes politiques car, dans les mois qui suivirent, ceux qui traînaient encore le pas rejoignirent les rangs de l'UC qui devint ainsi le seul parti ayant droit de cité au Cameroun oriental³⁸⁹. Le politologue Jean-Pierre Fogui ne croyait pas si bien dire lorsqu'il écrivait:

Cette incarcération des personnalités les plus marquantes de l'opposition résonna comme un véritable tocsin au firmament de la politique camerounaise : elle indiquait clairement vers quelle direction soufflait désormais le vent en même temps qu'elle servait d'avertissement aux autres opposants, réels ou potentiels. Au cours des six mois qui suivirent cette « opération coup de poing », on eut la preuve que la mise en garde avait été entendue, car on vit tour à tour 5 députés upecistes, 2 socialistes (partisans d'Okala qui avait pris des distances avec le régime) et 3 démocrates (de Mbida) se déclarer membres de l'UC. Ainsi, en moins de trois ans, Le Cameroun oriental était passé d'une situation de multipartisme (d'ailleurs beaucoup plus subi qu'accepté) à une situation de parti dominant qui n'allait pas tarder à devenir un parti solitaire), puis unique de fait.³⁹⁰

On peut donc affirmer avec une certaine aisance, et sans risque d'être contredit par les faits, qu'en 1965, Le président Barbotator Ahidjo avait atteint son but d'éliminer les formations qui animaient la scène sociopolitique dans la partie orientale du pays avant la levée de la

³⁸⁸ Ordonnance n°6210F118 du 18 mars 1962, citée par J.-P. Fogui, *L'intégration politique* au, p. 246.

³⁸⁹ M. Prouzet, *Le Cameroun*, Paris, Librairie Générale de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1974, p. 254.

³⁹⁰ J.-P. Fogui, *L'intégration politique* au, pp. 252-253.

tutelle³⁹¹. Il pouvait donc s'attaquer à la zone occidentale car, son objectif était, ne l'oublions pas, d'instaurer au Cameroun (tout entier) un régime de parti unique avec pour ossature l'UC. Ce qui sera d'ailleurs fait en 1966 avec la naissance de l'UNC Le 1er septembre.

Si le combat contre les autres formations politiques peut se comprendre étant donné que l'UC, proclamée "creuset de L'unité nationale", ne voulait aucune concurrence, tel n'est pas le cas avec les regroupements identitaires. Ces derniers, bien qu'ayant apportés dans le passé un soutien déterminant aux leaders politiques dans leurs fiefs respectifs, n'ont cependant pas franchi le Rubicon, en présentant des candidatures lors des différentes consultations électorales. En principe, l'appel à la constitution d'un grand parti national unifié ne concernait que les partis politiques. Or, les responsables de l'UC ne se contentèrent pas d'éliminer seulement les partis politiques rivaux; ils s'attaquèrent également, et avec autant d'acharnement, sinon plus, aux regroupements identitaires, oubliant, ou faisant semblant d'oublier, que les identifications ethno régionales représentent l'un des pivots de la conscience humaine en général et de la société Camerounaise en particulier³⁹².

Parallèlement au combat contre les partis politiques, les responsables de l'UC s'attaquèrent aux regroupements identitaires. Les interventions radiophoniques des caciques de l'UC tels que Moussa Yaya Sarkifada et Samuel Kame, chantres du parti unique et de la violence politique, furent fortement marquées d'avertissements et de mises en garde contre les forces hostiles à l'unité nationale, garant du développement économique du pays. Les hauts responsables administratifs apportèrent leur contribution à la lutte contre les forces responsables du tribalisme, du clanisme, et du régionalisme. Au cours d'une audience accordée à une délégation du *Ngondo* conduite par son inamovible président, Betote Akwa, Abraham Mve Ndong, Inspecteur Fédéral du Littoral, ne lâcha pas ses mots et déclara sans

³⁹¹ B. Lembezat, *Le Cameroun, Pays*, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Collection Survol du Monde, 1964, pp. 143-144.

³⁹² J-F. Bayart, "La politique camerounaise 1982-1986" in *Politique Africaine*, Paris, Karthala, 1986, n° 22 (*Le réveil du Cameroun*), p. 8.

gêne que la “poursuite de l’objectif d’unité et de paix nous commande de détribaliser les manifestations de culture”³⁹³.

Comme si cela ne suffisait pas, les responsables de L’UC firent intervenir tout un arsenal de textes juridiques pour briser le dynamisme ethno régional des regroupements identitaires. Le premier était l’ordonnance du 7 mai 1960 portant organisation de l’état d’urgence. L’article 4 de ce texte autorisait les “préfets à soumettre la circulation des personnes et des biens à des mesures restrictives et éventuellement aune autorisation administrative”. De même, ils devaient “interdire toutes les réunions et publications de nature à entretenir du désordre”. Dans un jeune Etat camerounais ou l’excès de zèle des bénéficiaires de l’acte de nomination du prince, donc de privilèges de toutes sortes, était un gage de promotion, les “chefs de terre”³⁹⁴ n’hésitèrent pas à interdire toute tentative de manifestation émanant des regroupements identitaires pour leurs assemblées, qu’il s’agisse des simples réunions ou des congrès et autres éditions annuelles.

Dans Le Sud-Cameroun par exemple, les hommes-liges de 1er ministre Assa’ale Mbiam, en L’occurrence Samba Ntoutoumou, le préfet de Kribi, et son homologue d’Ebolowa, Engolo, soumièrent les responsables de L’*Efulameyoni* a un régime de pression et menaces qui aboutit à la démission de son président général, Biba bi Ngota qui, tout comme le président général du *Ngondo*, Betote Akwa, avait fait Le voyage de New-York en 1959 pour soutenir la thèse défendue par Le gouvernement de Barbatora Ahidjo, alors 1er ministre de l’Etat autonome du Cameroun français³⁹⁵.

Comme si cette pression ne suffisait pas, les autorités sortirent l’artillerie lourde avec l’élaboration des lois qui ne laissaient plus aucune

³⁹³ J.-P. Fogui, L’intégration politique au, p. 128.

³⁹⁴ Au Cameroun, le “chef de terre” est un titre qu’on donne aux gouverneurs, préférés, sous-préfets et chefs de districts dans leurs unités de commandements respectives en leur qualité de représentant du chef de l’Etat.

³⁹⁵ Pour d’amples informations, lire R. K Kpwang. “Les associations régionales A caractère traditionnel et l’évolution sociopolitique du Cameroun: Le cas de l’Union Tribale N’tem-Kribi (NTNK) ou Efulameyon des origines A 1966”, Thèse de doctorat 3- cycle en histoire, Université de Yaoundé I, 1997.

chance aux regroupements identitaires. Ainsi, le président Ahidjo fit voter par “assemblée fédérale et promulgua une loi dont les termes montraient clairement que celle-ci visa a les regroupements identitaires, ou du moins les derniers qui, comme le *Ngondo*, continuaient à braver tes auto rites et les responsables du parti unique. La loi n° 67/LF119 du 12 juin 1968 stipulait dans son article 4 que « les associations présentant un caractère exclusivement tribal ou clanique, ainsi que celles qui sont fondés sur une cause ou en vue d’un objet illicite contraire aux lois et aux bonnes mœurs (...) sont nulles et de nul effet »³⁹⁶. Dans L’alinéa 2 du même article, il ressort que, “est considérée comme association exclusivement tribale ou clanique, toute association qui prétend n’admettre pour membres que les ressortissants d’un clan ou d’une tribu déterminée, ainsi que toute association qui, sans écarter explicitement les ressortissants d’autres clans ou d’autres tribus, poursuit en fait un but contraire à l’unité nationale”³⁹⁷.

L’application rigoureuse de cette loi par les “chefs de terre” sonna Le glas aux activités des regroupements identitaires. Ces derniers comprirent qu’ils étaient indésirables dans la République Fédérale du Cameroun (RFC). Les dirigeants de ces organisations furent contraints de les dissoudre pour rejoindre les rangs de l’UC. Pour les regroupements qui n’avaient pas jusque-là compris que les autorités monolithiques de Yaoundé ne voulaient plus les voir, leurs responsables procédèrent manu militari a des dissolutions forcées, Ce fut le cas de l’*Efulameyoni* en 1962 lorsqu’ Assa’ale Mbiam, de peur de perdre son poste de 1er ministre, se rendit a Ebolowa le 8 septembre, accompagné d’une escouade de gardes et d’évolués bulu a sa solde, au moment où se tenait le congrès du mouvement. Sans ménagement, il demanda de mettre définitivement fin aux activités de l’*Efulameyoni*, et somma tout le monde de militer désormais dans les rangs de l’UC³⁹⁸. Aucune des multiples protestations des notables présents aux assises ne le fit revenir sur sa décision, de sorte qu’en rentrant à Yaoundé, il

³⁹⁶ Cite par J. P. Fogui, *L’intégration politique au Cameroun*. p. 129.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ R. K Kpwang. “Les associations régionales à caractère traditionnel et l’évolution sociopolitique du”, pp. 302-304

donna l'ordre aux préfets des trois départements du Sud-Cameroun, Samba Ndoutoumou de Kribi, Moise Nlem Ntem d'Ebolowa et Engolo, nouvellement mute a Sangmélina, de lui débarrasser de tous ceux qui oseront désormais braver son autorité. C'est ainsi que le 8 septembre, jour de l'interdiction de l'*Efulameyoni*, qui était un jour de fête régionale célébrant l'arrivée du Dr Adolphus Clemens Good³⁹⁹, le missionnaire américain qui apporta aux populations du Sud-Cameroun Le message de L'évangile, se transforma en un jour de deuil régional.

A la fin des années 70, le *Ngondo* resta Le seul regroupement identitaire à mener encore ses activités⁴⁰⁰, mais sous la haute surveillance des autorités politiques et policières de l'inspection Fédérale du Littoral (IFL). D'ailleurs, par la suite, les autorités administratives ne tardèrent pas à montrer que les célébrations du *Ngondo*, organisées avec faste à Douala, les indisposaient⁴⁰¹. En 1980, Marcel Medjo Akano, Le nouvel IFL, ne s'encombra pas de scrupules pour mettre fin aux activités du *Ngondo*⁴⁰². C'est ainsi que le dernier des regroupements identitaires qui marquèrent la dynamique ethno régionale et culturelle du Cameroun disparut de la scène sociale et politique du pays.

Les autorités postcoloniales ont sacrifié les forces ethno régionales au prétexte qu'elles étaient l'incarnation du tribalisme et du régionalisme et, à cet effet, entravaient la réalisation de l'unité

³⁹⁹ C'est en effet le 8 septembre 1892 que le Dr Good, surnomme Ngoto Zambe (bon message de Dieu), arriva à Efoulan ou il érigea la toute première station presbytérienne en zone de peuple buIu. A vee le triomphe de la Mission Presbytérienne Américaine (MP A) dans le Sud-Cameroun, le 8 septembre devint une fête religieuse connus sous le nom d'Evamelunga (fin de l'obscurantisme religieux).

⁴⁰⁰ Il semblerait qu'il aurait eu un *modus vivendi* entre Le président Ahidjo et les élites duala, dont certaines, a L'instar de François Senga Kouh, étaient bien implantées dans arcanes du pouvoir. Cet accord tacite était que le *Ngondo* continue amener ses activités et qu'en retour, les Duala adhèrent massivement à l'UC. Cette information est relayée par le politologue; Jean François Bayart dans son livre *L'Etat au Cameroun*.

⁴⁰¹ J.-F. Bayart, *L'Etat au*, pp. 128-129.'

⁴⁰² Manu Djemba "Le *Ngondo* 1991 : la tradition a peau dure", *NgondoInfo*. n° S*ial, Dec.embre 1991, p. 5.

nationale. Au nom de cette dernière, on a donc sacrifié les regroupements identitaires. Pour le président Ahmadou Babatora Ahidjo, l'unité nationale veut dire qu'il n'y a sur le sentier de la construction nationale ni Ewondo, ni Douala, ni Bamiléké, ni Boulou, ni Foulbé, ni Bassa, etc., mais partout et toujours des Camerounais⁴⁰³.

Pour le chef de l'Etat, il y avait une frontière infranchissable entre l'Homme-tribal, c'est-à-dire le Bassa, le Boulou, l'Ewondo, etc., et l'Homme-nation, c'est-à-dire le Camerounais. En d'autres termes, le fait d'appartenir à un groupe tribal et L'affirmer était un obstacle pour être un bon citoyen camerounais. Dans la logique du président de l'UC, il fallait enrayer la tribu pour céder la place au Camerounais, l'Homme-tribal ne pouvant dans la même direction que l'Homme-nation. Les deux seraient donc incompatibles.

C'est le moment pour nous de réfuter cette thèse car, jamais dans le passe colonial d'après-guerre, qui a vu l'émergence de regroupements identitaires, on a la preuve d'un seul acte pose par l'un des regroupements identitaires allant à l'encontre d'une bonne cohabitation entre les différentes identités culturelles du triangle camerounais. Au contraire, leur contribution a été remarquable dans e processus de rassemblement des groupes à l'échelle régionale. Le politologue français Jean-François Bayart est du même avis lorsqu'il écrit:

Mieux vaut insister une dernière fois sur les fondements structurels et la raison d'être de ces appareils politiques, dont l'audience était, pour la plupart d'entre eux, départementale. Ils visaient, au niveau local ou régional, à transcender la différenciation des élites et à surmonter à cette échelle la crise organique ouverte au 19^{ème} siècle ; à ce titre, ils renvoyaient chacun à une situation historique particulière et irréductible. Autant dire qu'ils tinrent une place irremplaçable dans l'évolution du pays que l'on omet souvent aujourd'hui de reconnaître⁴⁰⁴.

⁴⁰³ A. Ahidjo, Contribution à la construction, p. 29.

⁴⁰⁴ J. F. Bayart, L'Etat au, p. 34.

Après avoir évolué en autisme, les regroupements identitaires sortirent de leurs fiefs en 1957 et se rapprochèrent pour:

Créer l'entente et l'amitié entre les forces régionales de rassemblement et par là entre les différents groupes sociaux du triangle national en luttant contre toutes les forces de tribalisme et de division des Camerounais⁴⁰⁵.

C'est dans ce contexte que le 10 mars 1957, quatre de ces regroupements⁴⁰⁶ se retrouvèrent à Yaoundé pour créer l'Union des Associations Traditionnelles du Cameroun (UNATRACAM) dont les objectifs principaux étaient de:

Coordonner leurs actions afin de parvenir à une meilleure défense et à une harmonisation des coutumes et des traditions avec le nouveau contexte et de veiller à la sauvegarde et au respect des valeurs spécifiques de chaque identité culturelle tout en tendant à l'édification d'une véritable nation Camerounaise⁴⁰⁷.

Constituée au départ de quatre regroupements identitaires, l'UNATRACAM a connu par la suite une expansion rapide de sorte qu'avant la fin du mois de juin 1957, elle avait déjà enregistré l'adhésion de la grande majorité des regroupements identitaires qui animaient la scène camerounaise. Mais, l'UNATRACAM ne se contenta pas d'accueillir uniquement les regroupements identitaires ; elle fut également ouverte aux associations de bonne volonté qui entendaient œuvrer dans le sens de l'unité des Camerounais et de la cohésion sociale.

C'est ainsi que lors de son Conseil national tenu le 13 avril 1958 à Odza, alors banlieue de la région de Yaoundé, on retrouvait parmi les associations membres, celles venant de la région septentrionale et d'obédience musulmane, à l'instar de l'Association des Musulmans du

⁴⁰⁵ ANY, APA 1040, UNATRACAM, 1957.

⁴⁰⁶ Il s'agissait du Kolo-Beti, Kwasio, Ngondo et l'Efulameyon.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Cameroun (AMC) et de l'Association des Musulmans de Ngaoundéré (AMG)⁴⁰⁸. Les participants, après avoir précédé a des rites spécifiques à chaque identité culturelle du triangle national, procédèrent à la plantation d'un arbre qu'ils appelèrent -alliance indestructible des peuples du Cameroun⁴⁰⁹.

Les responsables des regroupements identitaires ont montré qu'ils pouvaient se mettre au-dessus des intérêts partisans et œuvrer pour l'intérêt suprême des Camerounais⁴¹⁰. Les regroupements identitaires ont convaincu la société camerounaise de leur bonne foi, y compris.

Mgr Etoga, le tout 1er évêque camerounais, qui apporta sa "bénédiction" à leurs actions conjointes⁴¹¹. Pendant ces assises, l'UNATRACAM condamna la division sous toutes les formes et lança un vibrant appel à l'unité des Camerounais⁴¹².

L'action de rassemblement de l'UNATRACAM, ainsi que les assises d'Odza ont clairement montre que, du cote des associations regroupements identitaires, les responsables avalent clairement compris, contrairement aux autorités monolithiques de l'UC, qu'il existait bel et bien une frontière entre la dynamique ethno tribale et la conscience nationale ; autrement dit, entre l'Homme-tribal et l'Homme-nation. Les deux entités ne sont pas incompatibles. Elles pouvaient très bien aller dans la même direction des lors qu'il existe des acteurs sociaux et politiques intégrés, soucieux de l'intérêt collectif et des intérêts respectifs de chaque entité, Bref, les regroupements identitaires ont posé les bases d'une vraie unité nationale que, malheureusement, les responsables de l'UC ont saboté en plongeant e Cameroun dans un système monolithique qui est devenu une source de frustrations de toutes sortes.

⁴⁰⁸ ANY, 3AC 3364, UNATRACAM, 1957-1958.

⁴⁰⁹ La cérémonie consista, pour chaque représentant de regroupement identitaire et d'association, à déposer dans le trou ou devait être plante l'arbre symbolisant cette "alliance indestructible des peuples du Cameroun" un élément exotérique de sa zone d'origine. Cet arbre est toujours en place jusqu'à nos a Odza.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² R. K. Kpwang, "Les associations régionales", p. 278.

Ce que le système monolithique a forgé au Cameroun postcolonial n'avait rien avoir avec l'unité nationale; il s'agissait plutôt d'un *unicisme* précaire, qui donnait l'illusion d'une cohésion sociale.

Il apparaît de plus en plus aujourd'hui que l'unité nationale n'avait rien avoir avec l'engagement force du pays dans la voie du monolithisme politique car, les regroupements identitaires n'ont jamais été un obstacle pour arriver à cette fin au Cameroun. On n'avait pas besoin d'étouffer l'identité ethno régionale pour réaliser l'unité nationale. La preuve en est que depuis 1991, année de l'abrogation des textes viciés du début des années 60, à l'instar des ordonnances de 1962, qui furent à l'origine de la disparition des regroupements identitaires, on a assisté au retour sur la scène des regroupements identitaires. C'est le cas du *Ngondo*, de l'*Elog-Mpoo*, de la Dynamique Culturelle Kirdi (DCK) ou encore des multiples festivals organisés de part et d'autre du territoire. On prendra en exemple Le festival Mendumba ou encore Le festival Mbam'Art.

Les multiples actions que ces regroupements identitaires mènent dans leurs fiefs respectifs ne nuisent en rien à la cohabitation entre les différentes identités culturelles qui peuplent Le triangle camerounais.

En fin de compte, l'acharnement avec lequel les autorités de l'UC ont combattu les regroupements identitaires était lié non pas au souci de l'unité, mais à la volonté de caporaliser la société camerounaise afin de lui imposer un système de parti monolithique qui allait mettre fin à tout débat contradictoire au Cameroun; ce qui allait leur permettre de jouir du pouvoir et de ses délices en toute tranquillité. La vraie unité nationale ne se fait pas sur le dos des frustrations, comme celles créées par l'élimination des regroupements identitaires par les responsables de l'UC. La vraie unité se fait à travers l'intégration de toutes les forces culturelles dans une logique de cohésion nationale. C'est la voie frayée en 1957 par les regroupements identitaires et dont l'UNATRACAM fut la force motrice, mais que les responsables de l'UC ont fini par saper.

Conclusion

Au terme de cette analyse, il ressort que pendant la période de L'administration coloniale, les populations ont connu une intense active fortement marquée par la dynamique ethno régionale. Celle-ci était L'œuvre des regroupements identitaires, c'est-à-dire des organisations qui, au départ avalent pour objectif premier de consolider les liens de sang qui unissaient les groupes humains proches atout point de vue et cantonnées dans un espace. Mais, en 1957, ces groupes ont réussi transcender leurs particularismes pour tendre vers un idéal national montrant clairement qu'il existe bel et bien une frontière entre l'Homme-tribal et l'Homme-nation et que les deux sont appelés à aller dans la même direction.

A cet effet, les regroupements identitaires ont posé les bases d'une vraie unité nationale au Cameroun, celle-là qui intègre les particularismes et non celle qui cherche à les étouffer par tous les moyens⁴¹³. La renaissance des regroupements identitaires après la fin du régime monolithique, et surtout les actions sociales et culturelles qu'ils mènent aujourd'hui, ne sont pas incompatibles avec la volonté de vivre ensemble l'intérieur d'un même espace territorial national. En fin de compte, nous nous rendons compte qu'il y a une frontière entre l'Homme tribal et l'Homme-nation, mais les deux entités ne sont pas incompatibles. Elles sont appelées à aller dans la même direction. Les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, pays cosmopolite par excellence, ont prouvé cette réalité. Par contre, l'Union des Républiques Socialistes Soviétiques (URSS) et la Yougoslavie, qui ont voulu nier cette réalité, se sont effondrées.

⁴¹³Mbomimpa. Ethnicité et médiocratie en Afrique, l'homme tribal contre l'homme citoyen?, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1994, p. 12.

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Au-delà des frontières: Les milices armées et l'instabilité déstabilisation en Afrique central

Par

Faustin Kenne

Résumé

L'Afrique centrale est l'une des régions du monde les plus déstabilisées depuis l'avènement des indépendances. Cette situation s'est davantage cristallisée au début des années 90 dans un contexte dominé par la fin de la guerre froide et l'ouverture démocratique dans les pays du tiers monde. Au rang des facteurs et des acteurs de l'instabilité /déstabilisation, il y a bien évidemment les milices armées dont certaines ont été créées depuis la période coloniale. Les milices armées sont des armées non régulières, des mouvements insurgent constitués par des opposants aux régimes mis en place et qui visent en grande partie la conquête et l'exercice du pouvoir politique.

Parmi ces milices, on peut mentionner Le Sinistre de Défense Nationale du Kamerun (SDNK) et l'Armée de Libération Nationale du Kamerun (ALNK) au Cameroun, les Ninjas, les Cocoyes et les Cobras au Congo -Brazzaville, la *Lord Résistance Army* (LRA) en Ouganda, l'Armée Patriotique Rwandaise (APR), les milices Lendu et Hema en Ituri, les Janjawouid au Tchad et au Soudan, les miliciens interahamwé ... Les miliciens défient souvent l'autorité et sont responsables de nombreuses exactions sur la population civile, ce qui provoque de nombreuses migrations. Leurs actions vont souvent au-delà des frontières de leur territoire d'origine, créant une certaine instabilité. Les modes opératoires de ces milices armées sont diversifiées et leur impact sur le fonctionnement des institutions des Etats concernés est réel.

Mots clés: milices, frontières, stabilité, déstabilisation, guérilla, pouvoir.

Abstract

Central Africa is one of the most destabilized regions in Africa since the advent of independences. This situation has been more crystallized since the beginning of the 1990s with the end of Cold War and the introduction of democracy in developing countries. Amongst factors and actors of destabilization, we obviously have armed militia. Those armed militia are not regular armies. They rise up and emerge against the established power. Their objective is to conquer power and control the resources of the country. Amongst that militia, we can mention the Ninjas, the Coko yes and the Cobras in Congo -Brazzaville, the Lord Résistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, the Patriotic Army of Rwanda, the Lendu and Hema militia in Ituri, the Janjaweed in Chad and Soudan, the Interahamwe Militia .the SNDK and ALNK in Cameroon. The insurgent militia often defy the authorities and are responsible of many exactions on the civil population. This situation usually provokes migrations inside the country and beyond its frontiers. It also creates political and Sub-regional instability. Their ways of acting are so diversified and they have many implications on the institutions of the states concerned.

Keys words: militia, frontiers, stability, destabilization, guerrilla, power.

Introduction

Les milices sont des forces supplétives de l'armée, Une milice peut être organisée par des citoyens qui estiment que l'Etat ne peut pas assurer leur sécurité ; la milice peut au contraire être organisée par une autorité étatique pour servir de supplétifs aux forces officielles, dans des circonstances d'exception. Une armée de milice est fondée sur le principe du citoyen soldat, rapidement mobilisable, et dont la formation repose le plus souvent sur quelques périodes d'instruction et d'exercices. Une armée de milice dans ce cadre est une armée irrégulière, non permanente, créée dans une situation de crise plus ou

moins aigue.

La généralisation du recours aux miliciens met à mal nombre de doctrines militaires traditionnelles et fait peser une menace tangible sur la stabilité des Etats. Ce phénomène a pris une tournure extrêmement importante dès le début des années 1990 avec les nombreuses guerres civiles qui ont marqué d'un sceau particulier l'histoire du continent. En effet, les espoirs nés en Afrique à la fin de la guerre froide n'ont pas dure, De nombreux conflits⁴¹⁴ perçus comme des conflits de basse immensité, mais très meurtriers pour certains, y ont éclaté et apparaissent comme un scénario de changement de pouvoir. Ces guerres sont fondamentalement des guerres civiles⁴¹⁵ dans lesquelles les miliciens prennent activement part, le plus souvent en qualité d'enfants soldats. Les mouvements années prolifèrent le plus souvent dans les pays ou les régions en situation de crise, et s'inscrivent dans la mouvance de conflits ou les interférences régionales ou internationales sont multiples.

L'Afrique centrale est l'une de ces régions du continent particulièrement touchée par ces phénomènes de milices armées, En effet, presque tous les pays de cette sous-région ont connu ou connaissent encore réémergence des milices armées. Cette situation est favorisée par la résurgence des crises politiques incessantes qui secouent les Etats surtout depuis les années 1990. Le Rwanda, le Burundi, la Congo, la République Démocratique du Congo (ROC), le Tchad ... constituent leur terreau.

Dans cette réflexion, nous nous proposons d'analyser les modes opératoires décès milices armées et leur impact sur le fonctionnement des institutions des Etats concernés. Autrement dit, comment agissent ces mouvements rebelles? Quelles sont leurs implications sur les institutions et la société? Pour ce taire, nous nous appuyons sur des sources variées notamment les sources orales et sonores, les ouvrages généraux et de nombreux journaux, des rapports d'activités des

⁴¹⁴ Ce sont surtout des conflits internes, et par là-même des conflits de portée limitée, qui ne risquent pas de mettre en cause les équilibres internationaux.

⁴¹⁵ Pour plus d'informations, consulter la revue Questions intemationales no 5, Les conflits en Afrique, janvier-février 2004.

responsables des Nations Unies. La démarche optée est à la fois diachronique et comparative.

I. L'Afrique centrale entre une horde de milices gouvernementales et milices rebelles

Ici, nous allons dégager la typologie des milices armées en Afrique centrale en présentant un tableau synoptique qui n'est certes pas exhaustif compte tenu de la complexité des réseaux de leur développement.

1) Les milices armées de la période de décolonisation: le cas du Cameroun

Le Cameroun est L'un des rares territoires de l'Afrique noire francophone qui a obtenu son indépendance à la suite d'une guerre de libération nationale. Cette guerre de libération nationale a mis aux prises les milices de L'UPC (Union des populations du Cameroun) aux troupes, coloniales puis postcoloniales. A la suite de son interdiction par Le gouvernement.

Ces milices armées pratiquèrent dans les régions bassa, bamiléké, du Wouri et du Mounjo une véritable guerre subversive⁴¹⁶. Hormis ces milices rebelles, nous pouvons distinguer aussi la Garde Civique Nationale de l'Ouest (GCNO), une milice gouvernementale.

La Garde Civique Nationale de l'Ouest était un corps supplétif d'auxiliaires de l'armée crée par le décret N° 60/106 du 6 mai 1960, et dont le principal but était de lutter par les moyens conventionnels ou non contre les milices armées de l'UPC.⁴¹⁷ Au moment de sa création, la GCNO était une force paramilitaire prévue pour une durée d'un an pour faire face à l'insurrection armée qui frappait la région bamiléké depuis 1957. Elle avait pour objectif de conduire la jeune armée

⁴¹⁶ La guerre subversive est une lutte armée à l'intérieur d'un territoire contre l'autorité politique en place par une partie des habitants de ce territoire, aidée ou renforcée ou non de l'extérieur, dans Le dessein d'enlever à cette autorité Le contrôle de ce territoire ou au minimum de paralyser son action.

⁴¹⁷Journal Officiel de La République du Cameroun, mai 1960, p.69 1.

camerounaise sur le terrain⁴¹⁸. Elle était donc composée essentiellement d'unités locales, c'est-à-dire que le recrutement se faisait uniquement sur une base tribale. Cette stratégie était fondamentale parce qu'elle permettait à l'armée régulière d'avoir dans ses rangs des éléments maîtrisant non seulement le terrain, mais aussi et surtout la langue qui est capitale pour l'obtention des renseignements.

Cependant, contrairement aux milices rebelles qui étaient mal encadrées et mal équipées, la milice gouvernementale était dotée d'un armement moderne. En plus de sa mission militaire, elle menait également des actions civiles qui consistaient à protéger les populations des camps de regroupements, à leur apporter des soins de santé, à les rééduquer en faisant une propagande anti-rebelle. En 1963, les éléments de la garde civique étaient évalués à 1600 hommes. En 1965, ils étaient évalués à 2000 dans la seule Région Bamiléké en raison de la permanence de ce que Le pouvoir appelait la menace terroriste⁴¹⁹.

Il faut cependant souligner que ce corps supplétif comme la plupart des milices armées a commis quelques exactions sur les populations civiles suspectées de collaboration avec la rébellion. Par exemple, les insurgés ralliés qui refusaient d'apporter les renseignements nécessaires à la capture de leurs camarades restés en brousse étaient torturés. Cette méthode a permis à l'armée de démanteler facilement les milices rebelles⁴²⁰. Dans l'ensemble, l'action de la garde civique a été plus stabilisatrice que déstabilisatrice.

2) Les milices armées de la période post -guerre froide

a) Le Congo-Brazzaville et la sarabande de milices

« Ninjas », « Cobras II », « Cocoyes ». (C Mambas -. « Zulu -. L'imagination humaine a été suffisamment fertile pour trouver des qualificatifs appropriés aux vecteurs scabreux de la violence et de l'instabilité au cours de la crise congolaise. Pour assouvir leurs

⁴¹⁸ Rappelons au passage que l'armée camerounaise n'a été créée qu'en 1959, ce qui explique son manque d'expérience et la nécessité de créer un corps supplétif

⁴¹⁹ F.Kenne, « Les grands chefs ... », pp.241-247.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.; lire également G.Momo, Informations sur le terrorisme en Pays Bamiléké. Ses causes et ses effets, sl, 1986,

ambitions politiques, les principaux leaders politiques congolais ont largement fait usage des milices armées. Cette stratégie dérive de la volonté de domination et d'anéantissement systématique de l'adversaire politique considéré comme un rempart à l'accession au pouvoir ou à sa gestion.

La milice « Ninja II » a été créée au Congo-Brazzaville lors de la guerre civile de 1993 par l'ancien premier ministre congolais Bernard Kolelas. Les « Ninjas II » étaient des combattants camouflés et rompus aux tactiques de guérilla urbaine. À cette époque, les miliciens « ninjas II » constituaient alors la première composante d'un groupe de partisans armés de l'opposition, la seconde étant constituée de miliciens « cobras II » du Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT, ancien parti unique) du général Denis Sassou Nguesso.⁴²¹

En 1993, juste après l'élection de Pascal Lissouba à la présidence de la République, des élections législatives furent organisées au Congo. Suite aux résultats contestés par le camp présidentiel et les partis de l'opposition, un conflit armé éclata dans les zones sud de Brazzaville. Pour faire face aux attaques armées des miliciens « cocoyes », « mambas II » et « zulus II » de Pascal Lissouba, Bernard Kolelas enrôla de nombreux jeunes issus de son ethnie et vivants dans les quartiers sud de Brazzaville⁴²². La plupart de ces recrues étaient des anciens militaires et des jeunes généralistes du chef de l'opposition. Les « Ninjas II », qui bénéficièrent du soutien des « cobras », affrontèrent les troupes gouvernementales ainsi que leurs milices à Brazzaville après la contestation des résultats des élections législatives anticipées de 1993 par les partis d'opposition. Les « Ninjas » sévissaient essentiellement dans la région du Pool et les quartiers de Baongo et Makelekele. Les

⁴²¹ L'article de R. Bazenguissa intitulé « Milices politiques et bandes 'armées' à Brazzaville. Enquête sur la violence politique et sociale des jeunes déclassés », in *Les Etudes du CERI*, no. 13, avril 1996, fournit plus de détails sur la constitution de ces milices armées qui ont écumé le Congo au cours des années 90.

⁴²² Bernard Kolelas justifia alors la création de ses milices « ninjas » en réaction au pouvoir de l'époque dirigé par Pascal Lissouba qui avait constitué sa propre milice, appelée « cocoyes ».

«Aubevillois II (milice de l'UPADS⁴²³) quant à eux commettaient leurs exactions dans les régions du Niari, de la Lekoumou et de la Bouenza, et dans les quartiers de Mfilou et Diata, à Brazzaville.

En 1995, Bernard Kolelas négocia une alliance avec Pascal Lissouba. Les représentants de son parti, le Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Intégral (MCDDI) intégrèrent le nouveau gouvernement d'union nationale.⁴²⁴ Cette alliance entraîna une accalmie qui fut plutôt éphémère en raison de l'éclatement d'une nouvelle guerre civile qui opposa les partisans de Lissouba à ceux du général Sassou-Nguesso. En effet, au début de la guerre civile qui débuta le 5 juin en 1997, Kolelas joua les médiateurs entre les deux belligérants. Il finit par se positionner aux cotes de Pascal Lissouba, qui le nomma premier ministre en remplacement de Charles David Ganao, le 13 septembre 1997. Sa milice privée entra alors dans la guerre aux cotes des forces de Lissouba. Dans cet épisode, les « Ninjas » parcoururent aux cotes des « Cocoyes » à la guerre civile contre les « Cobras » de Sassou Nguesso, dont les partisans remporteront la guerre le 15 octobre 1997 avec le soutien des troupes angolaises et tchadiennes. Bernard Kolelas et Pascal Lissouba prirent le chemin de l'exil.

Le départ de Bernard Kolelas provoqua des dissensions au sein des « Ninjas » dont certains, les « Nsiloulous », furent dirigés par le révérend pasteur Frederik Bitsangou alias « Ntumi ». Ce dernier prit la tête de la milice réunifiée pendant la guerre civile de 1998 contre les troupes gouvernementales appuyées par les « Cobras ». Le Pasteur Ntumi est un homme d'église qui s'est fait une notoriété pendant les années 1990 en recueillant et en traitant les fous qui erraient dans les rues de Brazzaville. En 1997, il prétend avoir eu une révélation de Dieu qui lui

⁴²³ Il s'agit de l'Union Panafricaine pour la Démocratie Sociale dont Le leader est Pascal Lissouba.

⁴²⁴ A partir de 1994, un rapprochement s'opéra entre Lissouba et Kolelas. Ce dernier est installé en août 1994, dans son fauteuil de maire de Brazzaville, conquis depuis les élections de 1992, et Le premier ministre Yhombi-Opango nomme 3 ministres MCDDI dans son gouvernement en janvier 1995, à savoir Philippe Bikinkita, Luc Adamo Mateta et Mélanie Ibouritso.

demandait de se réfugier dans la région de Pool pour y préparer les jeunes à se défendre contre une éventuelle invasion militaire. Il commença d'abord par ses patients, ensuite il s'appuya sur les « Ninjas » en vue de la libération non seulement de la région, mais aussi et surtout de tout le Congo. Il réussit à convaincre plusieurs « Ninjas » auparavant rallées à Bernard Kolelas, ainsi que son entourage, pour la plupart ses anciens fous soignes, et des jeunes désœuvrés y compris les chômeurs, réputés être des fumeurs de drogues⁴²⁵. Pendant la guerre, les « Ninjas » et les « Cocoyes » formèrent un Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR), mouvement politique qu'il dirigea de fait jusqu'en 2005.

Après les accords de cessez-le-feu et de cessation des hostilités de décembre 1999 entre les belligérants de la crise, les autorités congolaises déclarèrent le CNR illégal. Mais Le pasteur Ntumi continua d'affirmer que seuls les dirigeants du CNR avaient la compétence pour le dissoudre.

Au demeurant, les crises congolaises ont surtout été alimentées par les milices armées qui ont écumé et paralysé la capitale Brazzaville et partant tout le pays pendant plus d'une décennie. D'après les Nations Unies, le Congo-Brazzaville comptait, jusqu'en 2000, 25.000 miliciens⁴²⁶.

b) Le Rwanda et la ROC, deux voisins, un triste destin

Le Rwanda et la ROC sont deux Etats de la région des Grands Lacs qui ont très peu connu les moments de paix depuis leur accession à la souveraineté internationale. Ce sont aussi deux Etats voisins qui ont comme dénominateur commun la fragilité, l'instabilité politique, les frontières poreuses et une population qui a connu des interactions avec des dénouements malheureux. Il s'agit surtout de l'épopée interahamwe.

⁴²⁵⁴²⁵ L'expérience montre généralement que lorsqu'une crise sociale éclatée, les principaux acteurs qu'on retrouve en premier lieu dans les rues sont les chômeurs, les sans-emplois, les désœuvrés, les enfants issus des familles pauvres, les bandits. Ce fut le cas au Cameroun pendant les villes mortes des années 1990 et pendant la crise sociale de février -mars 2008.

⁴²⁶ Voir Afrique Express, N° 248, du 18 avril 2002.

Les Interahamwe constituent la plus importante des milices rwandaises créées des 1992 par Le Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND), parti du président Juvénal Habyarimana au Rwanda. Le terme Interahamwe signifie « ceux qui combattent ensemble » en Kinyarwanda. Ces milices furent responsables de la plupart des massacres pendant le génocide en 1994. Ce nom serait attribué par les médias internationaux à toutes les milices des partis impliqués dans le génocide et qui ne pouvaient pas, de fait, être différenciés sur le terrain. Les Impuzamugambi furent par exemple les miliciens de la Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR) et participèrent au massacre avec les Interahamwe.

Après la libération de la capitale rwandaise Kigali par le Front Patriotique Rwandais (FPR), de nombreux Interahamwe entreprirent un exode vers les pays environnants, pour l'essentiel vers la ROC. Les multiples camps de réfugiés que ces génocidaires y formèrent devinrent rapidement de véritables sanctuaires militaires. En effet, c'est dans ces camps que s'étaient formés les miliciens, des jeunes gens recrutés et entraînés à l'exercice militaire. Continuant son activité après le génocide, la milice ainsi constituée se livra à des opérations militaires au-delà de la frontière du Congo, plus précisément au Rwanda. Braeckman souligne avec pertinence que :

La militarisation des camps s'est accompagnée de la multiplication des incursions à l'intérieur du Rwanda, des groupes de commandos menant des safaris, afin d'éliminer des survivants ou des témoins du génocide⁴²⁷

Les Interahamwe ayant émigré en ROC se regroupèrent avec des soldats Hutu des ex-FAR (Forces Armées Rwandaises) dans les camps de réfugiés. Ils constituèrent, sous le nom de Rassemblement Démocratique pour le Rwanda, un mouvement politique qui allait rapidement s'opposer au régime de Kigali. Ils recrutèrent dans leurs rangs aussi bien les Rwandais que les Congolais. L'organisation prit Le

⁴²⁷ Braeckman, L'enjeu congolais. L'Afrique centrale après Mobutu, Paris, Fayard, 1999, p.32

nom d'Armée de Libération du Rwanda (ALR). A partir de 2000, on les retrouva dans les Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR).

Ces regroupements des forces génocidaires en ROC furent invoqués par le FPR comme motif de leur implication dans la première et la seconde guerre du Congo. Déjà, à la tribune des Nations Unies en 1995, Paul Kagamé ne manqua pas l'occasion de souligner sa ferme volonté de déstabiliser le Congo en martelant que « Mobutu n'est plus qu'un *dying horse*, un cheval à l'agonie⁴²⁸ ». Cette attitude belliqueuse explique l'émergence de la rébellion banyamulenge⁴²⁹ à l'Est du Congo dirigée par Laurent Désiré Kabila et qui a été montée de toute pièce par Yoweri Museveni et Paul Kagamé⁴³⁰.

Le gouvernement rwandais a profité de la situation pour infiltrer des groupes armés dans la République Démocratique du Congo. En utilisant le prétexte de devoir chasser les rebelles Interahamwe qui pourraient retourner au Rwanda, des miliciens rwandais ont envahi la ROC. Cette chasse aux Interahamwe est aujourd'hui beaucoup questionnée et vue comme un prétexte pour pouvoir occuper le Congo oriental car les Hutus responsables du génocide (Interahamwe) sont une toute petite minorité parmi les Hutus de la ROC, et il est très difficile de savoir qu'ont fait ceux qui ont participé au génocide.

La poursuite de ces criminels par le FPR aurait causé la mort de plusieurs dizaines de milliers de militaires et civils, dont les familles des miliciens qui les accompagnaient. Invoquant ces événements, les forces négationnistes de l'ancien Rwanda pointent du doigt accusateur le FPR d'avoir massacré plusieurs milliers de personnes, essayant ainsi de

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p.30.

⁴²⁹ Les Banyamulenge sont des Tutsis installés à l'Est de la ROC depuis des années. Ils servirent de bras au régime de Kigali lors de l'offensive de 1996.

⁴³⁰ L'on doit comprendre rapidement les jeux et les enjeux de ces interventions. Museveni voudrait détruire les bases arrière de la Lord Resistance Army (une milice armée ougandaise) installée sur le sol congolais. Ceci lui permettrait d'écarter toute menace à son régime. Quant à Kagamé, il voudrait démanteler les camps de réfugiés devenus une véritable poudrière et par conséquent un élément déstabilisateur du régime de Kigali.

déplacer l'accusation de génocide vers un «contre-génocides ». Le massacre de Gatumba en août 2004 de 150 réfugiés d'origine tutsi dans un camp de réfugiés des Nations Unies au Burundi est un exemple controversé de la participation des miliciens et soldats génocidaires rwandais aux actions criminelles de l'ex-Zaïre.

Jusqu'en 2008, la MONUC (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo), force des Nations Unies stationnant dans l'Est de la RDC, et les forces armées congolaises tentaient encore de réduire les groupes de miliciens rwandais qui continuaient de déstabiliser la région⁴³¹. Ce problème a été et est encore l'enjeu constant des pourparlers entre les gouvernements congolais et rwandais qui exige d'ailleurs pour sa sécurité le démantèlement définitif de ces groupes déstabilisateurs.

D'une manière générale, depuis 1996, des milliers d'enfants ont été enrôlés dans l'armée congolaise et les milices du Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC), du Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD-Goma), du Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD-Kisangani/ML), des *Musunzu's Forces*, de l'Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC) dirigée par Thomas Lubanga, des *Lendu militas*, des *Mai Mai* et des *ex-FAR/Interahamwe*. Ces différentes milices, rebelles ou pro-gouvernementales ont, à des degrés divers, contribué à la désintégration et à la déstabilisation de l'Etat congolais.

c) Les milices tchadiennes

Le Tchad est un cas singulier. Depuis son accession à l'indépendance en 1960, il est en proie à une instabilité politique et à un conflit prolongé, ce qui a poussé certains auteurs à parler d'un « Etat

⁴³¹ L'ONU dispose de 17 000 soldats en ROC, dont 5000 sont déployés dans l'Est du pays. Les forces de maintien de la paix ont la difficile mission de protéger les civils à la fois des rebelles et de l'armée régulière. La Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (MONUC) a été constituée en 1999 mais s'est avérée impuissante devant les nombreux groupes armés qui se battaient pour le contrôle du territoire congolais et l'exploitation de ses richesses.

néant » ou d'un « Etat volatilisé⁴³² ». C'est un conflit dont la nature et les causes ont évolué au fil du temps et trouvent de nos jours leur expression dans trois éléments distincts mais interdépendants à savoir: l'affrontement, dans l'Est du pays, entre les forces gouvernementales et les groupes d'opposition armés (milices) tchadiens; des violences intercommunautaires et interethniques dans l'Est également⁴³³ et des tensions entre le Tchad et le Soudan le long de leur frontière commune. Le conflit a des incidences significatives le long de l'axe Tchad-Soudan, mais aussi de plus en plus sur la République centrafricaine, qui a connu aussi une longue période d'instabilité.⁴³⁴ Au Tchad, la situation politique, militaire et en matière de sécurité demeure extrêmement explosive en raison d'une part de la poursuite du conflit armé entre les forces armées tchadiennes et les groupes rebelles armés, de la présence, à l'Est du pays, de groupes rebelles étrangers (notamment soudanais), des raids transfrontaliers des milices « janjawid »⁴³⁵ et de la poursuite des tensions interethniques entre, principalement, les populations arabes et les populations non arabes d'autre part. Ces différentes tensions font émerger au Tchad une kyrielle de milices armées qui ne sont pas toujours faciles à identifier sur le terrain, mais qui serment une véritable panique au sein de la population civile.⁴³⁶

Le cas des « Janjawid » est le plus pathétique en ce début du XXI^{ème} siècle. Le terme « Janjawid » est utilisé pour qualifier les milices levées dans les tribus noires arabisées du Tchad et du Darfour,

⁴³² Magnant, « Tchad, crise de l'Etat ou crise de gouvernement ? » in Jean François Médard (sous la direction), *Etats l'Afrique noire. Formations, mécanisme et crise*, Paris, Karthala, 1991, pp.173- 203.

⁴³³ Ces violences intercommunautaires ont comme principaux acteurs les Arabes opposés aux autres communautés non musulmanes.

⁴³⁴ Il faut souligner ici que la porosité des frontières entraîne le déplacement de la population et des insurgés d'un pays à un autre ce qui crée une certaine instabilité dans la région.

⁴³⁵ Selon les auteurs, le terme janjawid s'écrit aussi de manière suivante : janjawid ou janjaweed.

⁴³⁶ Lire également J. Chapelle, *Le peuple tchadien. Ses racines et sa vie quotidienne*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1986, pp. 271-290.

et qui sont tristement connus pour les massacres, les viols et les déportations qu'elles commettent depuis 2003 dans cette région. La première apparition des « Janjawouid » remonterait à 1988, après la victoire du président tchadien Hissene Habré, soutenu par la France et les Etats-Unis, sur l'armée libyenne, qui mit fin aux visées territoriales du colonel Kadhafi sur le Tchad, notamment sur la riche bande d'Aouzou.⁴³⁷ Après cette défaite, l'allié tchadien de la Libye, Cheikh ibn Omer Saeed se retira avec ses milices arabes au Darfour, où il fut accueilli par Musa Hilal, le nouveau chef des Arabes du Nord Darfour. Hilal avait déjà ravitaillé en armes les miliciens de Saeed. Une incursion franco-tchadienne en territoire soudanais détruisit le camp d'ibn Omer, mais ses milices restent armées grâce au soutien des hâtes soudanais, dans la lignée de l'idéologie de suprématie arabe libyenne.

Dans les années 1990, les « Janjawouid », amalgame de milices arabisées du Tchad et du Darfour, étaient tolérées par le gouvernement soudanais qui les intégrait à sa politique régionale de contrôle territorial. En 1999-2000, confronté aux menaces de rébellion dans le Darfour occidental et septentrional, Khartoum décida d'armer les milices « Janjawouid ». L'amplification de L'insurrection en février 2003, conduite par l'Armée de Libération du Soudan et le Mouvement pour la Justice et l'Egalité poussa le gouvernement soudanais à répliquer en faisant des « Janjawouid » sa principale force de répression.

Le conflit survenu au Darfour a introduit un élément explosif au sein des nombreux groupes ethniques qui se trouvent de part et d'autre de la frontière soudano-tchadienne. Des groupes années alliés au Soudan et au Tchad ont proliféré. Beaucoup d'entre eux sont soutenus ou tolérés par le gouvernement tchadien ou soudanais. En effet, en juillet 2007, un rapport de l'organisation *Human Rights Watch* soulignait que l'armée tchadienne et ses forces paramilitaires alliées ont encore dans leurs rangs des milliers d'enfants soldats qui échappent au programme de démobilisation malgré les assurances données par le

⁴³⁷ Lire à ce sujet A. Denvers, Atlas des conflits dans le monde, collection Points choc, Paris, Edition 1, 1987, pp.192-199.

gouvernement de libérer tous les combattants mineurs⁴³⁸. Les civils tchadiens sont devenus les victimes des nombreuses attaques organisées par les milices, qui sont généralement le bras armé des mouvements politiques ou de contestation de la mauvaise redistribution des ressources du territoire notamment, le pétrole.

Les principaux responsables d'exactions et des souffrances appartenant tant au groupe ethnique arabe que non arabe à Dar Sila, ont fait état d'une atmosphère de défiance et d'hostilité mutuelles. Les attaques ont été accompagnées d'accusations respectives de liens avec les rebelles du Darfour d'une part ou avec les milices « Janjawoud » d'autre part. Par exemple, un témoin Dajo interrogé par *Human Rights Watch* a prétendu que les Arabes tchadiens étaient alliés aux milices soudanaises et « sont devenus des Janjawoud ». En revanche, un chef arabe Salamata soutenu que certains groupes ethniques, dont les Dajo et les Muro, avaient des liens avec les rebelles soudanais dont le but était de « tuer les Arabes ». De manière globale, les victimes des violences se recensent aussi bien dans le camp des Arabes que des non Arabes.

Par ailleurs, derrière les récents affrontements cependant, il y a des tensions sous-jacentes persistantes relatives aux ressources en terres et en eau, notamment entre certains groupes arabes, comme les Salamata, qui sont plutôt des bergers, et des groupes non arabes de la région tels que les Dajo et les Muro, qui sont plutôt des agriculteurs sédentaires. De plus, l'arrivée des réfugiés du Darfour dans la partie Est du Tchad a encore accru la pression sur les ressources disponibles⁴³⁹.

II. Les modes opératoires des miliciens

Les méthodes utilisées par les milices armées, qu'elles soient rebelles ou gouvernementales, sont presque les mêmes. Ces méthodes oscillent

⁴³⁸ Pour plus d'informations sur cette question, consulter Nations Unies (Conseil de sécurité), Rapport du Secrétaire général sur les enfants et le conflit armé au Tchad, 7 août 2008.

⁴³⁹ Pour plus d'informations, consulter le site <http://www.liration.afrique.org>. « Les civils d'origine arabe également visés par les milices », p.4.

entre guérilla, affrontement avec les forces régulières et banditisme. Les milices rebelles s'appuient sur les solidarités ethniques tout en profitant de la fragilité des structures traditionnelles⁴⁴⁰.

1) Recrutement et utilisation des enfants soldats

La plupart des milices armées en Afrique centrale sont constituées des enfants soldats. Un enfant soldat est une personne, garçon ou fille, âgée de moins de 18 ans, membre d'une arme gouvernementale ou d'un groupe arme, quel que soit son rôle, ou accompagnant de tels groupes, autrement qu'en tant que simple membre de la famille, ainsi que les filles recrutées à des fins sexuelles ou pour des mariages forcés⁴⁴¹. Certaines milices armées comme la LRA en Ouganda remplacent ses soldats tués par des enfants enlevés au cours des raids. La stratégie des troupes gouvernementales ou des milices armées qui opèrent avec les enfants soldats consiste à les enrôler sur la base du volontariat ou d'une manière forcée⁴⁴².

D'une manière générale, les enfants soldats sont des enfants qui vivent dans des régions où règnent de manière permanente l'insécurité et l'instabilité. Ce sont:

- des enfants séparés de leur famille ou provenant d'une famille brisée (orphelins, enfants non accompagnés, enfants chefs de famille ...);
- Des enfants défavorisés économiquement et socialement : enfants de familles pauvres⁴⁴³, enfants n'ayant pas accès à une éducation ou une formation professionnelle. Dans le souci de trouver une occupation qui se doit d'être lucrative, l'engagement dans l'armée est alors perçu comme une alternative au travail civil ;

⁴⁴⁰ A.Bourgi «Les groupes armés à l'assaut des Etats» in Questions internationales. Les conflits en Afrique, n°5, janvier-février 2004, p.35.

⁴⁴¹ Voir Le Protocole Facultatif à la Convention des Nations Unies sur les Droits de l'Enfant adopté Le 25 mai 2000 par les Nations Unies.

⁴⁴² Lire L'autre Afrique n°79 du 10 au 16 février 1999, pp.8-15.

⁴⁴³ Un enfant issu d'une famille nantie à moins de risques de se faire recruter ou enrôler qu'un autre issu d'une famille défavorisée.

- Des enfants de groupes marginalisent : enfants des rues, réfugiés, déplacés, enfants issue de certaines minorités. Ce sont donc des enfants en situation de détresse qui espèrent trouver le salut dans l'usage des armes, ce qui explique d'ailleurs leur intolérance et leur mépris pour la personne humaine;

- Des enfants des zones de conflits (comme dans Le Nord Kivu à l'Est de la RDC)⁴⁴⁴. Pour avoir une protection dans ces zones, les enfants désœuvrés n'hésitent pas à se faire recruter dans les milices rebelles et se transforment irrémédiablement en acteurs de la violence. Une fois recrutés, ces jeunes soldats sont envoyés dans des camps d'entraînement ou ils sont soumis à des traitements violents et à un endoctrinement systématique. On leur enseigne le maniement des armes, on les entraîne au combat, on leur apprend à tuer sans renâcler. Les conditions de vie imposées dans ces camps sont si dures qu'il est ordinaire que des enfants y laissent leur vie avant même d'être envoyés au combat. Les enfants sont systématiquement coupés, tant physiquement que psychologiquement, de leur foyer et de leur ancienne vie. L'obligation de commettre des atrocités dans leur propre communauté, voire contre les membres de leur famille, fait partie de ce processus d'isolement⁴⁴⁵.

2) La guérilla, un mode d'action par excellence des milices armées

Souvent drogues, les miliciens sont d'intrépides combattants qui utilisent essentiellement les méthodes de guérilla, que ce soit dans les zones urbaines ou dans les zones rurales. Ils précèdent par des embuscades, des assassinats, des rapt, des actions d'attaque, d'intimidation, de sabotage ou de destructions menées contre des objectifs militaires ou civils. L'action déstabilisatrice des milices armées consiste à commettre de nombreuses exactions sur la population civile. C'est le cas des milices rwandaises qui causent une véritable panique au

⁴⁴⁴ Bapuwa Mwamba, «Congo Kinshasa .La guerre: pourquoi ? Pour qui?» in Jeune Afrique Economie du 31 août au 13 septembre 1998, pp 92-103.

⁴⁴⁵ Pour plus d'amples informations, lire Unicef, Rapport sur la situation des enfants soldats, juin 2004.

sein de la population hutu qui réside au Congo oriental. Les troupes rebelles attaquent les petits villages, pillent, volent et violent. Ces multiples agressions poussent les habitants des zones rurales à migrer vers les zones urbaines pour des raisons de sécurité, Cette migration en masse fait augmenter le nombre des personnes sans aucune occupation et la misère dans les villes du Nord et du Sud Kivu comme Goma.

Les milices armées précèdent par des pillages, des destructions et tuer les dans les zones qu'elles contrôlent, contre les sympathisants supposés de l'autre partie. Les milices «Janjawoud » par exemple utilisent la tactique de la terre brûlée qui consiste à brûler tout au passage, afin de priver l'ennemi de ses sources de ravitaillement en denrées alimentaires. Cette stratégie est accompagnée d'atrocités généralisées à l'encontre des civils : massacres, viols et déportations. Leurs raids sont souvent très rapides et accompagnés des prises d'otages. Cette tactique devient un mode opératoire par excellence chez certaines milices qui réclament une forte rançon contre la libération des otages. C'est le cas chez les *Bakassi Freedom Fighters*, milice armée qui opère dans le golfe de Guinée en vue du contrôle des champs pétrolifères.

Les vols et les viols sont des pratiques courantes chez les miliciens. A travers les vols, les miliciens se ravitaillent en denrées dont ils ont besoin. Ils dépouillent les populations de leurs biens: argent, produits agricoles, bétail ... Cette pratique leur permet donc de se procurer les armes dont ils ont besoin pour opérer et assurer l'efficacité de leur action. Pour Alain Bourgi,

A défaut de conquête rapide du pouvoir, préalable indispensable à l'accès aux ressources publiques, les « chefs militaires » s'installent dans la précarité et utilisent tous les moyens, y compris les pillages, pour assurer « la survie financière » des espaces qu'ils contrôlent⁴⁴⁶.

Dans ce genre de capharnaüm, les seigneurs de guerre,

⁴⁴⁶ A.Bourgi « Les groupes armés à l'assaut des Etats » in Questions internationales. Les conflits en Afrique, n°5, janvier-février 2004, p.42.

pratiquement à l'état de nature, n'ont plus de considération pour la personne humaine. Les femmes et les jeunes filles sont sexuellement abusées, Par exemple, entre mai et décembre 1999, près de 1200 femmes déclaraient avoir été violées au Congo Brazzaville. Ces viols s'accompagnent le plus souvent de la transmission des maladies sexuellement transmissibles. En RDC, le viol est devenu une arme redoutable entre les mains des miliciens et des soldats de l'armée régulière⁴⁴⁷. Les miliciens utilisent Le viol non seulement pour leur plaisir, mais aussi pour humilier l'ennemi⁴⁴⁸.

III. L'impact des miliciens sur le fonctionnement des institutions et la société

Les activités des milices sont génératrices de l'instabilité et de la déstabilisation. Dans la plupart des Etats ou les milices armées interviennent dans les conflits, on assiste à une déstructuration voire une destruction complète du tissu social. La ROC est un modèle archétypal où l'Etat déstabilise a échoué dans ses missions régaliennes, notamment la défense du territoire et la protection des citoyens contre les multiples exactions des miliciens.

Le véritable problème des miliciens se situe au niveau de leur formation. Ce sont le plus souvent des individus recrutés ici et là dans les couches les plus défavorisées. Soumis à des conditions rudes de travail (tortures, absorption des drogues et autres excitants), ils n'ont aucun respect pour la personne humaine. Ils agissent par vengeance et éprouvent du plaisir à tuer. Ils n'ont de respect que pour leurs maîtres qui les emploient pour le contrôle des richesses ou la conquête du

⁴⁴⁷ Lire à ce sujet la communication de C.M.Kalombo Mbuyu intitulée « Violences faites aux femmes dans Le Kivu montagneux : contexte, acteurs et solutions durables », communication présentée à Yaoundé lors du colloque de la Fondation Paul Ango Ela sur Le thème: «Stabilités et instabilités en Afrique centrale: logiques et dynamiques d'une configuration régionale complexe» organisée du 17 au 19 novembre 2009.

⁴⁴⁸ Les témoignages poignants et choquants des femmes victimes de telles violences peuvent être consultés ou écoutés sur les sites de RFI et de France 24.

pouvoir.

On peut aussi évoquer la déstabilisation des institutions. Il s'agit de la fermeture des écoles, la paralysie des structures sanitaires, etc. Dans la crainte des rapt et des enrôlements forcés, les élèves sont contraints d'abandonner leurs établissements⁴⁴⁹. Dans la même mouvance, les structures sanitaires sont pillées et trappées de paralysie. Dans les zones soumises au diktat des milices armées, l'insécurité devient permanente, la peur s'installe, les victimes des traumatismes corporels et psychologiques sont nombreuses.

Les actions des milices armées entraînent de manière implacable de vastes mouvements de déplacement de la population. En mai 1999, le gouvernement congolais avait estimé le nombre de déplacés à 140.000 ; au Tchad, le Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les Réfugiés (HCR) estimait en 2006 qu'environ 63000 Tchadiens avaient déjà été déplacés par des violences interethniques dans l'Est du pays. En mai 2009, le nombre de réfugiés congolais en Ouganda est estimé à 72.000 personnes.⁴⁵⁰ Dans les camps de réfugiés qui essaient partout dans la sous-région, les populations sont souvent plongées dans un misérabilisme typographique et ne comptent que sur l'aide alimentaire internationale pour leur survie. L'habitat y est délabré. Loin de leurs villages, de leurs tribus, de leurs ethnies voire de leurs pays, les populations sont complètement déboussolées et vivent dans un chômage permanent. Par ailleurs, la famine, la malnutrition, les maladies et les pertes en vies humaines rythment le quotidien des habitants. Les milices interahamwe furent responsables de la plupart des massacres pendant le génocide rwandais de 1994 qui fit près de

⁴⁴⁹ Selon Sydney Morning Herald du 20 septembre 2007, les hommes du chef rebelle Laurent Nkunda ont vidé une dizaine d'établissements secondaires et quatre écoles primaires, OU ils ont emboîlé de force les enfants. Selon les Nations Unies, les filles furent emmenées comme esclaves sexuelles, les garçons comme soldats, en violation des lois internationales.

⁴⁵⁰ R. Marchal, « Anatomie des guêtes en Afrique », Questions internationales. Les conflits en Afrique, nos, janvier février 2004, pp.28-29. Lire également dans la même revue l'article de M.Gaud, « L'Afrique entre décomposition et recomposition », pp.6-24

800.000 morts⁴⁵¹.

On assiste souvent à une situation de *no man's land* ou il y a quasiment une impossibilité chez les citoyens de jouir pleinement de leurs droits. Devant la menace constante des représailles de la part des miliciens, les populations des zones de conflit sont généralement privées de leurs droits les plus élémentaires: droits politiques, droits économiques, droits sociaux.

Conclusion

Au terme de cette analyse, il est convenable de souligner que les milices essaient de manière vertigineuse en Afrique centrale. Cette émergence est favorisée par la multiplication des guerres civiles qui ont atteint leur pic au cours des années 1990. Ces milices armées œuvrent à la fois pour les régimes au pouvoir et pour les partis d'opposition qui aspirent à la conquête et à la gestion du pouvoir. Elles font recours aux armes pour réaliser leur dessein. Cette action s'inscrit dans le cadre de leur stratégie de déstabilisation et d'affaiblissement de l'adversaire. A travers les méthodes de guérilla qu'elles utilisent, elles sont vectrices de violences et d'instabilité. Dans leurs modes opératoires s'entremêlent banditisme, rapacité, violence aveugle et grande criminalité.

Au regard de l'ampleur que prend ce phénomène dans la région d'Afrique centrale avec tout ce que cela comporte comme impunité, instabilité et déstabilisation, on est en droit de s'interroger sur la législation internationale concernant cette pratique et également sur les capacités des Etats concernés à démobiliser, à désarmer et à réinsérer socialement ces seigneurs de la guerre une fois la crise désamorcée, ceci dans la perspective d'instaurer un climat socio-politique plus ou moins stable. Dans les cas où certains Etats volatilisés sont incapables de neutraliser les seigneurs de la guerre, la communauté internationale devrait prendre ses responsabilités et traduire ces individus devant la Cour Pénale Internationale comme c'est déjà le cas avec Germain

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.; lire également Nations Unies, Rapport de la commission indépendante d'enquête sur les actions de l'Organisation des Nations Unies lors du génocide de 1994 au Rwanda, S/1999/1257, 16 décembre 1999.

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Le Commerce Transfrontalier Entre Le Cameroun et ses Voisins

By
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Résumé

Le sort d'une région frontalière est de subir, malgré toutes les surveillances, un flux et reflux d'habitants sur lesquels le contrôle est difficile. Pour ces peuples, la frontière n'est qu'une vue de l'esprit. Leur espace est continu et ils n'ont même pas souvent conscience d'une quelconque limite. Par diverses voies, ils passent d'un côté à l'autre du territoire, surtout pour des raisons commerciales. Le commerce est en effet l'un des éléments fondamentaux sur lesquels reposent l'existence et la capacité de fonctionnement de l'économie et de la société. Il est devenu un secteur pourvoyeur d'emplois et de richesses, et engendre une mobilité des hommes et des biens qui semble effacer l'effectivité des frontières.

Mots clés: Commerce, échanges, frontières, marches, produits, contrebande.

Abstract

Despite invigilations, frontier zones always undergo constant movements of inhabitants which are difficult to control. For those people, a frontier is an abstract idea. They think that their area is continuous, that is, has no limit. That is why they move from one end of the territory to another, particularly for commercial reasons. Trade is one of the basic elements of the running of the economy and society. It provides jobs and wealth, and causes the mobility of people

and goods making frontier at time to seem irrelevant.

Key words: Trade, exchange, frontiers, markets, products, contraband.

Introduction

Les auteurs qui se sont intéressés aux échanges commerciaux s'accordent à reconnaître qu'ils sont au cœur des préoccupations aussi bien des pays développés que de ceux en développement. Affirmer que les échanges commerciaux sont un moyen efficace pour mieux lutter contre la pauvreté, unir tous les peuples du monde afin de créer les richesses, c'est montrer l'intérêt que les Etats modernes ont attirés des échangés. C'est l'exemple du Cameroun et de ses voisins qui volent toujours de nombreuses personnes et marchandises traverser leurs frontières terrestres.

Les marches frontaliers, qui sont les principaux points d'échangés entre le Cameroun et ses voisins, sont, entre autres: le marché de Nbaiboum entre le Cameroun et la République Centrafricaine, les marches de Bongor et Kousséri entre le Cameroun et le Tchad, le marché de Bangui entre le Cameroun et la ville de Maidougouri au Nigeria, le marché d'ikom toujours entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria, les marches d'Abang Minko'o et de Kye-Ossi entre le Cameroun et ses deux voisins du Sud, à savoir le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale, le marché de Bitam, ville gabonaise située dans la province du Woleu Ntem chef-lieu Oyem.

La monnaie étant un instrument incontournable des échanges commerciaux modernes, la dévaluation du franc CFA de 1994 à paralyse les économies africaines. La première conséquence s'est ressentie dans les échangés. Dorénavant, les couts des produits d'exportation allaient baisser au profit des produits importes. Au niveau du Cameroun et de ses voisins victimes du manque de complémentarité dans les échangés, le commerce prit un coup sévère.

Dans les lignes qui suivent, nous nous proposons de revisiter les échangés commerciaux entre le Cameroun et les Etats frontaliers, d'en indiquer les permanences, les ruptures, et d'en analyser les tenants et les aboutissants.

I. Les Echanges Commerciaux Entre le Cameroun et les Pays de l'Afrique Centrale

a. Une activité de longue date

Les échanges commerciaux entre le Cameroun et les Etats frontaliers sont un phénomène très ancien. Longtemps avant la colonisation, les différents groupes ethniques qui peuplaient ces vastes territoires se mouvaient librement et entretenaient diverses relations sans aucun contrôle, L'attaché au territoire et au sol était toute relative. Dans certains cas, les entités politiques étaient délimitées, non par des frontières au sens classique du terme, mais par une imbrication d'espaces multiples, constamment faits, défaits et refaits aussi bien par les guerres et les conquêtes que par la mobilité des biens et des personnes. L'invasion européenne vint modifier les relations d'antan entre ces peuples. Des frontières arbitraires furent établies. Elles dessinèrent des territoires géographiques auxquels furent ensuite accolés des noms dont certains changèrent avec les indépendances. Elles marquèrent, des 1960, des limites de souveraineté entre Etats africains. Comme partout ailleurs dans le monde, ces limites de souveraineté se traduisirent; par exemple, par des dispositions concrètes en matière de protection douanière, de politique commerciale ou de politique d'immigration. L'argent fut introduit, et les sphères d'influence européenne en matière de commerce furent définies en pénétrant plus en profondeur dans l'hinterland. Des frontières artificielles délimitant le commerce furent créées.

Pour briser ces anciennes solidarités existantes ou tout au moins les contrôler de près, les Allemands, maîtres du Cameroun de 1884 à 1916, instituèrent une stricte surveillance des frontières, avec l'organisation des barrières douanières rigides. C'est ainsi que les officiers de douane assistés des dizaines de tirailleurs furent postés sur les grands axes du commerce traditionnel, notamment à Garoua, à Moubi et à Dikoa face à la colonie britannique du Nigeria, et à Golombe, à Bongor, à Kousséri et à Goulfeï face à la colonie française du Tchad, pour surveiller les mouvements des caravanes. En 1904, les droits d'entrée du sel au Nord Cameroun autrement que par le biais des Allemands étaient de 20 pfennigs par tonne. Les droits dont les Allemands

frappèrent les produits d'exportation, L'hésitation que manifesta Le marchand africain devant la présence de l'Européens interdicteur des convois d'esclaves, la diminution inévitable des marches du Baguirmi et de leurs transactions avec le Quadai, tout cela porta à l'économie de l'Adamaoua peul un coup funeste, capable de l'amoindrir avant peut aussi, les caravanes qui franchirent les frontières se feront-elles de plus en plus rares et restreintes⁴⁵².

b. Le resserrement des relations commerciales entre le Cameroun et l'AEF

Pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale, les colons français qui contrôlaient la totalité de la production commercialisable au Cameroun et en Afrique Equatoriale Française (AEF) furent mobilisés, et il s'en suivit une rupture des liens commerciaux avec la métropole, La constitution d'un gouvernement de l'Afrique française libre apporta des modifications favorables à un resserrement des relations commerciales entre le Cameroun et l'AEF.

Dans un premier temps, le département du Woleu-Ntem (Gabon septentrional) comprenant les subdivisions d'Oyem, Bitam, Minvoul et Mitzi fut détaché provisoirement du territoire gabonais puis rattaché à celui du Cameroun⁴⁵³. La suppression le 1^{er} juillet 1941 de la frontière douanière entre le département du Woleu-Ntem et le Cameroun marqua le début de l'union douanière entre le Cameroun et l'AEF. Mais c'est le décret du 27 décembre 1941 portant suppression de la frontière douanière entre le Cameroun et la totalité de l'AEF qui mit en place une union douanière entre le Cameroun et l'AEF comme l'indique son article premier:

⁴⁵² A. P. Temgoua, « L'hégémonie allemande au Nord-Cameroun de 1890 à 1916 », thèse de Doctorat de 3^e cycle en histoire, Université de Yaoundé, 1990, pp.265-266. Les restrictions s'expliquaient par le fait que, malgré les mesures prises par les autorités allemande.", certains marchands Haoussa et Kanowi gardaient leurs anciennes habitudes commerciales du fait d'un certain nombre de facteurs qui fondaient leurs relations.

⁴⁵³ Journal officiel du Cameroun français, 1^{er} novembre 1940, p.320.

A dater du 1^{er} janvier 1942, les droits et taxes applicables à l'importation et à l'exportation dans les territoires de l'AEF et du Cameroun sera fixés au même taux. A partir de la même date, la frontière douanière est supprimée entre les territoires de l'AEF et celui du Cameroun, et les échanges entre ces territoires seront admissibles en franchises de tout droits et taxes d'entrée et de sortie⁴⁵⁴.

Si le commerce était entièrement libre entre le Cameroun et l'AEF, en revanche, il fallait concilier les intérêts budgétaires des deux territoires en prenant des dispositions spéciales sur le plan douanier. C'est ainsi que l'union douanière fut supprimée par un décret du 19 octobre 1948. Mais les relations économiques et douanières entre le Cameroun et l'AEF se poursuivirent de manière privilégiée grâce à la signature, le 17 février 1955, d'une convention qui prévoyait l'exonération des droits de sortie et d'entrée pour les produits originaires de l'AEF ou du Cameroun et transférés dans l'autre territoire pour y être consommés. Les produits susceptibles de bénéficier de cette mesure faisaient l'objet chaque année de contingents arrêtés d'un commun accord entre les deux entités.⁴⁵⁵

Un certain esprit libéral apparaissait à travers cette convention dans la mesure où elle permettait un courant d'échanges frontaliers entre le Cameroun et l'AEF. En effet, selon l'article 2 de la convention, les échanges frontaliers devaient se faire en franchise totale des droits d'entrée, de sortie ou de consommation intérieure et des taxes sur le chiffre d'affaire. Cette convention considérait comme trafics frontaliers les échanges d'animaux et de produits d'origine animale ou les cultures de crue produites par les habitants des zones frontalières.

Ce système avait l'avantage de permettre aux régions frontalières de se procurer des produits et des marchandises manquant à leur économie propre. Tel était notamment le cas des régions du Sud-Cameroun (Ebolowa, Ambam) et du Nord-Gabon (Woleu-Ntem) dont l'existence d'affinités ethniques était de nature à intensifier ces

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 15 janvier 1942, p.440.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., p.539.

échanges. La situation de voisinage obligeait les populations d'une zone frontalière à utiliser les marches de l'autre zone qui étaient parfois plus proches que les marches nationaux. Les populations frontalières s'y rendaient pour vendre leurs produits ou pour acheter les biens dont elles avaient besoin. Cette nécessité de la vie quotidienne avait déterminé les territoires de l'AEF et le Cameroun à régler, à travers l'article 2 de la convention, le commerce dans les zones frontalières. Il s'agissait tout d'abord d'une certaine catégorie de marchandises destinées à la consommation. Ensuite, l'achat et la vente de ces produits relevaient surtout des besoins des frontaliers et de leur propre consommation.

Des dispositions spéciales furent prises en ce qui concernait les territoires du Cameroun et du Gabon. Tout d'abord, en ce qui concerne l'exportation du cacao gabonais par les ports camerounais de Kribi et Douala, aucun contrôle de conditionnement n'était effectué à nouveau au Cameroun pour délivrance du certificat de contrôle de l'AEF⁴⁵⁶. Cette mesure avait l'avantage de ne pas soumettre le cacao gabonais aux difficultés auxquelles étaient confrontées les marchandises qui transitaient en territoire étranger pour y être exportées. Ensuite, une disposition fut prise entre le Cameroun et le Gabon en ce qui concernait le ravitaillement de la région Woleu-Ntem par le Cameroun: le Haut-Commissaire de la République française au Cameroun donna délégation au chef de région à Ebolowa pour autoriser la réexportation sur le Woleu-Ntem des produits d'origine française pris à la consommation du Cameroun. Il s'agissait des produits tels que le ciment, les tiges ondulées, les pièces détachées.⁴⁵⁷ Cette disposition tendait à faciliter les transactions avec l'extérieur de la région Nord-Gabon qui, de par sa situation géographique, ses données démographiques et l'existence de la route du Gabon, s'orientaient davantage vers cette partie que vers les ports de Libreville ou de Point Noire.

La convention réglant les relations économiques et douanières

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., p.54.

⁴⁵⁷ E.W. Fofack, « Les relations bilatérales camerouno-gabonais de 1960 à nos jours », mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 2003, p.23.

entre le Cameroun et L'AEF posa cependant des problèmes de déséquilibre industriel. C'est pour cela que le 17 février 1955, au moment du renouvellement du décret du 19 octobre 1948, il fut ajoutée à cette convention commerciale, une convention industrielle dont la particularité reposait sur le fait qu'elle accordait l'exemption automatique pendant cinq ans, des droits d'entrée et de sortie pour les produits fabriqués par une industrie implantée dans l'un des territoires douaniers et n'ayant pas son homologue dans l'autre.

Le 23 juin 1959, les quatre Etats de l'AEF, à savoir le Congo, le Gabon, le Tchad et la Centrafrique, créèrent l'Union Douanière Equatoriale en abrégé UDE pour conserver le plus longtemps possible leur unité antérieure dans le domaine économique. L'UDE reposait sur les principes du marché commun: la suppression des obstacles aux échanges entre les membres, l'établissement d'un tarif douanier commun à l'égard des pays tiers et l'harmonisation des législations. Immédiatement, la nécessité de réorganiser les relations économiques avec le Cameroun s'imposa à elle, ce d'autant plus que le Cameroun avait, avec chacun de ces Etats, une frontière commune. C'est ainsi que le 23 juin 1961, il fut signé à Bangui une nouvelle convention réglant les relations économiques et douanières entre les Etats de l'UDE et le Cameroun, en vue de la constitution progressive d'un marché commun entre les cinq pays et de parvenir par étapes à une union douanière. L'aboutissement de cette évolution fut la création de l'Union Douanière et Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (UDEAC) le 8 décembre 1964 à Brazzaville. L'UDEAC disparaîtra en 1998 pour laisser la place à la CEMAC (Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale).⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁸ La CEMAC, qui envisage la création d'une marche commune, a un plan d'intégration qui prévoit la construction des routes bitumées afin de permettre une circulation facile de pays en pays. Certaines de ces routes ont déjà été bitumées avec le soutien de l'Union Européenne, Citons, entre autres, la route Bertoua-Garoua Boulouliant reliant le Cameroun à la République Centrafricaine, la route N'Gaoundéré-Moundou reliant le Cameroun au Tchad, et la route Yaoundé-Ambam qui relie le Cameroun à la Guinée Equatoriale. Voir à ce sujet A.F Nkou, « Le Cameroun et ses voisins. Un bilan de relations politiques, économiques et culturelles », thèse de

L'intégration du Cameroun dans un ensemble économique avec les Etats de l'ex-AEF lui ouvrait la possibilité d'obtenir de potentiels aillés, aussi bien sur le plan économique que sur le plan stratégique, face à la proximité d'un puissant voisin tout le long de sa frontière Ouest, en l'occurrence le Nigeria. Dans cet ordre d'idée, la création en 1965 à Port-Gentil d'une raffinerie commune aux cinq Etats de L'UDEAC allait permettre la distribution du pétrole gabonais dans tous les pays membres. Pour le Cameroun, l'élargissement de son nouveau marché potentiel et le développement des échanges commerciaux avec les autres Etats de la sous-région étaient encouragés.

c. Le cas particulier des échanges commerciaux avec le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale

Aussi bien pour les populations camerounaises que pour les populations gabonaises et Equato-Guinéennes, les échanges commerciaux constituent un bien capital qui touche tous les aspects du développement. Si le Cameroun a eu besoin du Gabon par le passé pour ses hydrocarbures et aujourd'hui encore pour son marché, le second a toujours besoin du premier pour ses produits vivriers et autres services. Une telle flexibilité des échanges commerciaux n'a pour but que de promouvoir la consolidation des relations entre les peuples de ces pays.

Les mouvements de balancier qui affecte les flux vivriers du Cameroun vers le Gabon depuis plusieurs décennies étayent la fluctuation des itinéraires et des modes de transport à une échelle différente. Les échanges commerciaux entre le Cameroun et le Gabon alternent entre deux axes: maritime et routier.

L'ouverture de 500 km sur l'océan Atlantique donne au Cameroun de nombreuses facilités d'échanges avec les pays africains dont le Gabon. Le transport des marchandises par la mer entre Douala et Libreville se faisait déjà bien avant les années 1980, mais avec une

Doctorat en relations internationales, IRIC, Yaoundé, 1976; et A. Zozime Tamekamta, «Convoitises frontalières, richesses, hétérogénéité culturelle et crises socio politiques en zone CEMAC depuis 1960 », mémoire de DEA en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 2005.

régularité et une intensité incomparables par rapport à celle de 1980. L'accroissement du cabotage entre les ports de Douala et Libreville depuis la fin de l'année 1993 atteste la gigantesque coupure des flux opérée par la vole maritime sur la voie terrestre. En l'espace de quelques mois, un nombre restreint de bateaux s'est spécialisé dans la desserte de la ligne Douala-Libreville. La flotte se composait d'un ferry, de trois chalutiers, d'une barque, du Ndjolé et du Solmar V. Tous ces bateaux ont été affrétés sur la ligne Douala pour répondre aux besoins des commerçants camerounais. Le Solmar V et le Ndjolé s'adonnaient respectivement à la desserte de Sao Tome et des ports Equato-Guinéens de Bata et Malabo. Le commerce triangulaire entre Malabo, Douala et Libreville était en plein essor depuis 1980, car le port de Malabo, jouant de ses contrôles douaniers moins sévères et de ses basses taxes, était devenu une plaque tournante des échanges camerouno-gabonais⁴⁵⁹. A partir de juillet 1996, le nombre de bateaux diminua considérablement signe d'un déclin amorcé de la vole maritime. Ce mode de transport était désormais considéré comme un cauchemar par les commerçants camerounais exportateurs de vivres. En premier lieu, ce type de transport devenait plus cher que l'acheminement par route. En plus, l'organisation médiocre des rotations entre les bateaux, leur capacité de charge insuffisante et leur surcharge qui rendaient périlleux le voyage, étaient unanimement décriée. La mauvaise coordination des navires, en partie imputable à l'état de la marée qui provoquait de sérieux retards, était très préjudiciable aux commerçants. De même, le déversement en bloc des produits agricoles à chaque accostage d'un bateau engendrait une saturation du marché librevillois, qui faisait chuter les prix, notamment lorsque ces bateaux arrivaient au même moment.

Le transport routier évitait ces déconvenues car le rythme d'arrivée des camions ou taxis bâches était plus étalé dans le temps, et la capacité

⁴⁵⁹ Edimo Ndombi D., « Transports, commerce et relations étatiques en Afrique Centrale de 1960 à 2000 », mémoire de DEA en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 2006; M. Kanou Ngwouanfo, « Les échanges commerciaux entre le Cameroun et Le Gabon de 1960 à 2006 », mémoire de DEA en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1, 2007.

des véhicules était inférieure à celle des bateaux. C'était le mode de déplacement le plus dominant tant pour les échanges à l'intérieur des pays que pour les liaisons inter-Etats. Les données disponibles indiquent que le réseau routier principal dans la zone CEMAC avait, en 2004, une longueur totale de 57.858 km dont 12% seulement étaient des routes bitumées⁴⁶⁰. Le Cameroun était le mieux loti en matière d'infrastructures routières, ce qui justifiait son rôle dominant dans les échanges commerciaux.

Selon l'arrêté ministériel n03295/MINTP/CAB du 9 novembre 1999 portant définition des routes du réseau prioritaire, l'axe Yaoundé-Ambam-frontière Gabon-frontière Guinée Equatoriale longue de 295 km faisait partie de la Nationale no.2 compte tenu de son importance dans les échanges commerciaux. Entre Yaoundé et Libreville existaient deux itinéraires différents: le premier reliait directement Yaoundé à Libreville; le second suivait la cote et traversait la Guinée Equatoriale. La différence linéaire n'était que de 52 km. La capture des flux par l'un ou l'autre itinéraire dépendait de l'état de fonctionnement des deux bacs, chacun situé sur un itinéraire terrestre différent. Ces deux bacs, installés à Eboro et à Ngoazik, permettaient de franchir le fleuve Ntem. Quand l'un des bacs était en panne, l'autre détournait vers lui et vers la route sur laquelle il se trouvait une partie des flux vivriers. Cette valse successive d'un itinéraire à l'autre, entre le Gabon et le Cameroun, a commencé en juin 1993, à la suite d'un accident du bac gabonais d'Eboro. En attendant, les pirogues sans moteur, exploitées par les populations riveraines fang, s'étaient substituées au bac. Monopolisant la traverses, les piroguiers fixaient des prix aussi exorbitants qu'arbitraires. Par exemple, avant, la traverses était gratuite pour les passagers, tandis qu'une modeste contribution était exigée pour le passage des marchandises. Le prix du transport en pirogue pour personne seule était désormais de 400 francs (avril 1994), et un petit colis était taxé au minimum 2000 francs CFA. Le transport par bac d'une tonne de bananes était de 10.000 francs en 1990; en 1994, la

⁴⁶⁰ Commission Economique des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique, Les économies de l'Afrique Centrale, Maisonneuve, 2004, p.8 ; A. Zozime Tamekamta, « Convoitises frontalières, richesses ... », p.62.

traverses d'une même tonne par pirogue coûtait le triple.

L'incivisme des piroguiers fang et le souci des autorités camerounaises à protéger le commerce avec le Gabon entraînèrent la mise en place du bac camerounais de Ngoazik qui ouvrit un corridor terrestre entre les deux pays. Les flux vivriers basculèrent à nouveau, et la liaison terrestre entre Yaoundé et Libreville fut maintenue grâce à une déviation routière entre Ambam et Bitam, qui permettait de contourner le goulot d'étranglement d'Eboré. Cet itinéraire traversait à partir d'Ambam les villages camerounais de Ngoazik et Kye-Ossi, puis, au Gabon, celui de Meyo-Kye, avant d'atteindre Bitam. L'avantage de cette route était qu'elle pouvait être sillonnée de bout en bout par les véhicules. Les véhicules empruntaient le pont métallique frontalier à une vole sur la rivière Kye, construit par le Gabon en 1976 et long de 62 km. Quant au franchissement du Ntem, il s'opérait en territoire camerounais par le bac de Ngoazik payé par l'Etat grâce à un préfinancement de 80 millions de francs CFA de la Cimencam qui était intéressée par la remise en circulation de l'engin pour pouvoir approvisionner son dépôt de Kye-Ossi⁴⁶¹.

Depuis 1993, les pays de l'UDEAC se souciaient de mettre en place des itinéraires routiers structurants. C'est dans la zone dite des trois frontières que se situait le plus grand handicap en matière de circulation routière, le fleuve Ntem compliquant les échanges entre le Cameroun, le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale et isolant la bande d'Olamze du reste du territoire camerounais. C'est donc pour encourager cette volonté politique d'intégration que l'Union Européenne a soutenu ce projet, notamment en finançant la construction de deux ponts sur le Ntem et une bretelle routière de 18,8

⁴⁶¹ Un péage modéré était exigé pour emprunter le bac, afin de couvrir les dépenses de maintenance. En 1996, les tarifs oscillaient entre 500 francs pour un véhicule léger et 10.000 francs pour un camion chargé de plus de 15 tonnes. La traversée d'un camion de 7 tonnes coûtait 7.500 francs à Ngoazik contre 50.000 francs à Eboré. Awoumou Come D.G., « Le couple Cameroun-Gabon et la dynamique d'intégration en Afrique Centrale: enjeux, contraintes et réalités », thèse de Doctorat en relations internationales, IRIC, Yaoundé, 2002.

km entre Biyi-Eba et Meyo-Kye en territoire gabonais⁴⁶². Le 11 novembre 2005, ce grand projet atteignit l'apothéose avec son inauguration. Jamais l'Afrique Centrale qui était confrontée à d'importants défis en matière d'intégration régionale n'avait enregistré un mouvement aussi intense et aussi porteur d'espoir.

L'axe Libreville-Yaoundé était la première liaison entre les capitales d'Afrique Centrale à être entièrement bitumée. L'importance économique attendue du projet Ntem montra que c'était avant tout le trafic régional qui allait en profiter. Ainsi, le tonnage de marchandises augmenta pour atteindre 75.000 tonnes par an de trafic longue distance. Dans des proportions plus importantes encore, le trafic régional des passagers atteignit, dans les deux sens confondus, les 1.000 personnes transitant tous les jours sur le pont d'Eboro.

Quant aux échanges commerciaux entre le Cameroun et la Guinée Equatoriale, ils ont été affectés par les relations conflictuelles entre les deux pays, et ce depuis la période dictatoriale de Macias Nguema⁴⁶³. De 1973 à 1979, les exportations du Cameroun vers la Guinée Equatoriale sont passées de 733 tonnes à 53 tonnes ; les importations quant à elles sont passées de 0,3 tonne à 1,7 tonne⁴⁶⁴. En 2004, les exportations du Cameroun en direction de la Guinée Equatoriale représentaient 11 %. Il s'agissait surtout des produits vivriers comme les pommes de terre, la banane plantain, les haricots, les aubergines, etc. La fermeture de la frontière par la Guinée Equatoriale en 2009 - elle reste ouverte du côté camerounais - a entraîné une diminution considérable de ces exportations. Nous disons bien diminution, et non arrêt total car quelques camions transportant les marchandises en provenance du

⁴⁶² B. Bekolo-Ebe et al, L'intégration régionale en Afrique centrale. Bilan et perspectives, Paris, Karthala, 2003, p.74. Le montant était de 15 milliards de francs CFA en don non remboursable dans le cadre du FED et de 1,2 milliards de francs CFA du gouvernement gabonais.

⁴⁶³ Koufan Menkeme J., «Les relations entre le Cameroun et la Guinée Equatoriale de 1960 à 1990 : vicissitudes et perspectives d'un bon voisinage », Nidl', Revue interdisciplinaire de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Dschang, n°7, 2008, pp.193-227.

⁴⁶⁴ www.comercepotentiel/afrique.htm

Cameroun sont autorisés à traverser la frontière, la Guinée Equatoriale dépendant encore largement de l'extérieur sur le plan alimentaire, et le Cameroun étant considéré comme le « grenier vivrier » ou le « garde-manger » des consommateurs Equato-Guinéens. Les importations pour la période 2004-2008 sont passées de 9% à 5% du potentiel indicatif⁴⁶⁵, ce qui veut dire que le Cameroun importe très peu de la Guinée Equatoriale.

A partir de la fin de l'année 2005, les échanges commerciaux entre le Cameroun et le Gabon d'une part, et entre le Cameroun et la Guinée Equatoriale d'autre part, ont pris un nouvel envol. Les marchés transfrontaliers d'Abang Minko'o et de Kye-Ossi ont été désenclavés par la construction de deux ponts sur le fleuve Ntem: l'un à Eboro du côté gabonais et l'autre à Ngoazik, côté camerounais. Avec cet ouvrage, l'axe routier (bitume) Yaoundé-Libreville est devenu une réalité, ce qui a propulsé le commerce⁴⁶⁶. Pour la première fois dans l'histoire communautaire de la CEMAC, le commerce entre le Cameroun et ses deux voisins du Sud que sont le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale a bénéficié de l'attention des hommes politiques des trois Etats. C'est ainsi que le 10 avril 2006, le Ministre camerounais du commerce, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, le Ministre gabonais du commerce et du développement industriel chargé du NEPAD, Paul Biyoghe Mba, et le Ministre Equato-Guinéen de l'intégration, sous régionale, Balthazar Engongo Edjo, se sont retrouvés aux marchés frontaliers d'Abang Minko'o et de Kye-Ossi pour toucher du doigt les réalités du commerce régional⁴⁶⁷.

Ces trois pays, comme beaucoup d'autres pays africains, sortaient petit appétit d'une décennie de crise politico-économique et sociale dont les manifestations sur l'emploi étaient multiples: chômage des diplômés, compression de personnels, diminution des revenus salariaux nominaux et réels, remous syndicaux, etc. Le commerce apparaissait dès lors comme un secteur prometteur ou chômeurs et

⁴⁶⁵ Le potentiel indicatif renvoie à la capacité d'importation d'un pays par rapport à un autre.

⁴⁶⁶ www.sysmin.gabon.org

⁴⁶⁷ Cameroon Tribune, n° 8575/4774 du lundi 10 avril 2006, p.11,

travailleurs se lançaient afin de créer les richesses et surmonter les difficultés de l'existence.

Rappelons que les marches frontaliers d'Abang Minko'o et de Kye-Ossi jouent un rôle primordial dans le commerce entre le Cameroun et ses deux voisins du Sud que sont le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale. Ils sont les points de chute des tonnes de produits vivriers camerounais en direction du Gabon et de la Guinée Equatoriale⁴⁶⁸. L'installation de l'agglomération frontalière de Kye-Ossi a suscité les appétits d'abord de la Guinée Equatoriale puis du Gabon⁴⁶⁹. Kye-Ossi est devenu un grand carrefour d'échanges commerciaux entre les trois pays: le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale y reçoivent des vivres frais du Cameroun, pendant que ce dernier reçoit essentiellement du poisson fume du Gabon et des boissons, des produits de parfumerie de la Guinée Equatoriale⁴⁷⁰. Parmi les populations camerounaises, les Bamiléké, qui détiennent une part très importante dans l'économie du pays, ont manifesté très tôt un gout et une habilité certaine pour le commerce avec le Gabon et la Guinée Equatoriale. Possédant de gros capitaux, ils se sont même accapares des échanges commerciaux camerouno-gabonais.

⁴⁶⁸ Voir à ce sujet l'intéressant article de Kegne Fodouop, «Le commerce frontalier dans le département du Ntem au Cameroun », Cahiers d'Outre-Mer, Bordeaux, 1987, pp.13-21 ; et l'ouvrage de K. Bennafla K., Le commerce frontalier: acteurs, espaces et politiques, Paris, Fayard, 2003; voir également H.O. Dylebong Tchuikou, « KyeOssi, une plaque tournante dans les relations Cameroun-Gabon-Guinée Equatoriale de 1968 à 2003 », mémoire de Maitrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé 1,2006.

⁴⁶⁹ Au marche de Kye-Ossi, les Equato-Guinéens viennent acheter des vivres auprès des commerçants et agriculteurs camerounais. Il s'agit surtout des tomates, des avocats, des carottes, des pommes-de terre, des condiments.

⁴⁷⁰ Depuis le 8 janvier 2009, la frontière de Kye-Ossi est malheureusement fermée par la Guinée Equatoriale. Cette fermeture est durement ressentie par les populations de part et d'autre de la frontière.

II. Les Echanges Commerciaux entre Le Cameroun et Le « Géant Du Continent» (Nigeria)

Grace à leurs potentialités, leurs poids économique et démographique⁴⁷¹, le Cameroun et le Nigeria sont deux leaders sous régionaux aux marches très intéressants. La très longue frontière (environ 1.700 km) qui les sépare et leurs multiples liens historiques et socio-culturels⁴⁷² les disposent inéluctablement à de fructueux échanges, et ce depuis l'époque précoloniale. Malgré les difficultés qui les ont souvent émaillés, les échanges commerciaux entre les deux pays n'ont cessé de se développer à cause de leurs enjeux multiples.

Ces échanges ont une particularité: ils ne sont pas harmonisés et se font dans une sorte d'anarchie qui cause d'importants manques à gagner à l'Etat camerounais à cause du phénomène de la contrebande⁴⁷³ et son corollaire qui est la corruption⁴⁷⁴. Le long de la frontière entre les deux pays, le concept de *settlement* est généralement utilisé pour désigner tout type de parlement informel verse en particulier aux «agents en uniforme» charges du contrôle des marchandises, cela tant du côté camerounais que du côté Nigérian, n'y a pas de reçu contre ces parlements, étant donné qu'ils vont dans les poches de ces individus. Cette pratique est largement encouragée par

⁴⁷¹ Le Cameroun est le leader de la CEMAC avec 19 millions d'habitants, soit environ 25% de la population communautaire; c'est la première économie de la sous-région de l'Afrique Centrale. Quant au Nigeria, avec ses 149 millions d'habitants il est l'un des grands marchés rentables du continent.

⁴⁷² Les facteurs qui favorisent les échanges camerouno-nigériens ont été bien analysés par V.G. Fanzo dans «Transfrontier relations and resistances to Cameroon-Nigeria colonial boundaries, 1916-1945 », thèse de Doctorat d'Etat en histoire, Université de Yaoundé, 1982.

⁴⁷³ La contrebande est classée parmi les activités économiques qui ne sont ni évaluées ni enregistrées, Voir à ce sujet l'article de Kegne Fodouop, «La contrebande entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria », Les cahiers d'Outre-mer, Revue de géographie, n° 16, Bordeaux, janvier-mars 1985, pp.5-25.

⁴⁷⁴ Généralement, la corruption fait partie intégrante de la contrebande et du greffage d'activités informelles sur le secteur formel en tant que tel.

ces fonctionnaires de service. Elle est devenue l'un des moyens d'accumulation de capital dans le secteur informel, auquel ont largement recours douaniers et policiers des deux sexes, ainsi que d'autres institutions formelles du pays⁴⁷⁵.

Il convient de relever que l'existence d'une très longue frontière difficilement contrôlable par les deux pays est en soi-même une force profonde ou un facteur favorable à cet état de chose. De part et d'autre de cette frontière, aussi bien dans les franges méridionales que septentrionales, les échanges sont facilités par l'unicité des peuples aujourd'hui divisés. Dans la partie méridionale par exemple, la frontière entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria a divisé un nombre important de tribus. C'est le cas des Ejagham et des Soki de la région de Manyu ; ces peuples furent repartis entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria, donnant ainsi les Ejagham du Cameroun et les Ejagham du Nigeria, les Boki du Cameroun et les Boki du Nigeria. C'est également le cas des Efut, Korup, Anyang, Assumbo, Ekot, Essimbi, Esu, Jukun, qui sont désormais repartis de part et d'autre de la frontière⁴⁷⁶. Dans la partie septentrionale, la frontière a affecté les Chamba, les Batta, les Tigon, les Kamkam, les Kotofo, les Mambila, les Kaka, les Ndoro, les Fali, les Marghi, les Kilba, les Foulbé, les Haoussa et les Kanouri⁴⁷⁷. La présence de ces tribus dans la zone frontalière est un facteur favorable des échanges camerouno-nigériens, d'autant plus qu'il s'agit des échanges entre les peuples frères unis par la tradition, l'origine, la langue et même les liens de mariage.

La contrebande ou commerce transfrontalier informel est le transport illégal de marchandises et/ou de personnes à l'intérieur ou en

⁴⁷⁵ C'est ainsi qu'en 1993, une contrebandière de Mamfe spécialisée dans le commerce illégal du carburant du Nigeria a obtenu un contrat local de fourniture de 16000 litres de carburant à la Société Nationale d'Electricité (SONEL) basée à Mamfe. Cf. M. Niger-Thomas, « Les femmes et l'art de la contrebande », Bulletin du CODESRIA, n°2, 3 et 4, 2000, p.61.

⁴⁷⁶ V. G. Faso, « Trans-frontier relations ... », p.133.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.142-149. Les échanges camerouno-nigériens dans cette partie du pays bénéficient d'autres facteurs favorables qui sont la religion islamique et la langue (le foulbé).

dehors d'un pays pour frauder le fisc. C'est un type de commerce international qui contourne les droits et les lois restrictives en vigueur⁴⁷⁸. En Afrique de l'Ouest, les produits primaires passent frauduleusement les frontières, en échange des produits de première nécessité tels que savon, sucre et kérosène. Dans son analyse des diverses stratégies utilisées par les femmes africaines pour faire face à l'Etat, Papart relève que les femmes marginalisées sont aussi de plus en plus actives dans l'économie illégale, dans la mesure où c'est un domaine qui contourne délibérément le contrôle de l'Etat. En outre, elle fait remarquer qu'un grand nombre de femmes, et notamment d'analphabètes, ont réagi à la baisse des opportunités économiques dans l'économie salariale en entrant dans les zones d'incertitude du commerce illicite.⁴⁷⁹ Van Stanten documente la manière dont les femmes Mafa de Mokolo (Nord-Cameroun) se lancent dans le commerce et parfois gagnent des sommes assez importantes en faisant de la contrebande⁴⁸⁰. En raison de l'insuffisance des réponses de l'Etat face à la marginalisation des femmes, et de son incapacité à contrôler cette forme non orthodoxe de commerce, certaines femmes ont tiré des avantages sociaux et économiques de la contrebande. Les *Ikom Line Women* ainsi que d'autres femmes de Mamfe (Sud-Ouest du Cameroun) qui ont trouvé plus rentable d'abandonner la prostitution au profit de l'entrepreneuriat, et de capitaliser sur la contrebande, illustrent parfaitement ce phénomène. Certaines femmes sont parvenues à combler le déficit budgétaire de leurs ménages et à maintenir un certain statut social grâce à des activités de contrebande. Cela veut dire tout simplement que si le commerce clandestin appauvrit l'Etat, il apporte des richesses conservables à des gens qui n'ont guère d'autres moyens de les acquérir. Il représente la solution locale à des problèmes locaux.

Il est intéressant de noter que la contrebande est un phénomène de longue date dans la région de Mamfe. Elle fut consécutive à la mise en place de restrictions commerciales. Ce que les gens considéraient comme normal devint tout d'un coup illégal. Ces restrictions

⁴⁷⁸ Bien souvent, des droits élevés engendrent la contrebande.

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. M. Niger-Thomas, «Les femmes et l'art de la contrebande », p.58.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

empiétaient sur le «libre-échange» qui existait autrefois entre les commerçants Efik de Calabar au Nigeria et les intermédiaires Ejagham de Mamfe au Cameroun. Les «libre-échangistes» d'autrefois dans la zone de Mamfe devinrent des contrebandiers.⁴⁸¹ Avant l'indépendance en 1960, Mamfe devait sa renommée à ses carrefours qui favorisaient diverses activités commerciales. La piste de la Cross River a joué un rôle crucial dans la communication entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria. C'est un grand bassin qui forme les sources de la région Old Calabar du Nigeria, et la Cross River. Ce fleuve s'écoule de la zone de Mamfe par l'unique ouverture dans les montagnes environnantes, c'est-à-dire en passant par Ikom, entre les limites septentrionales des Obam et du Balegete Plateau. La Cross-River se distingue par ses interminables coudes et tournants brusques, permettant de nombreuses traversées du trafic fluvial d'une berge à l'autre, d'où son nom. L'ouverture de la route Mamfe-Ikom depuis 1945 n'a pas réduit le trafic fluvial. Jusqu'à ce jour, l'infrastructure routière est restée faible, ce qui fait que la grande voie de communication de la Cross-River, maintenant appelée Fleuve Manyu au Cameroun, demeure une voie de sortie principale vers le Nigeria, en particulier pendant la saison des pluies. Cette situation a largement contribué à l'essor de la contrebande dans la région⁴⁸².

À la fin des années 1970 et au début des années 1980, farine, riz, cubes maggi, noix de cola et produits Guinness étaient frauduleusement introduits au Nigeria, à partir du Cameroun. En retour, les commerçantes camerounaises achetaient ce qu'on appelait localement «ignames d'lkorn» fortement pressés, kérosène, détergents, oignons, arachides, haricots blancs, et les revendaient au Cameroun sur les marchés villageois périodiques, mais surtout sur le grand marché de Mamfe. Par la suite, certaines ajoutèrent la vente de whisky, ustensiles de ménage, longueurs de tissus résistants pour robes et chemisiers. D'autres se lancèrent dans le commerce *d'ernu* du Cameroun (Yaoundé)

⁴⁸¹Ibid p.63.

⁴⁸²F Agbor Bessong, « The role and impact of the Nigerian trading activities in Mamfe, 1922-1961 », memo ire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaounde 1, 2004, pp.46-47.

au Nigeria, une innovation dans les activités commerciales des femmes de la province du Sud- Ouest. Occasionnées par la nécessité de faire le commerce de produits qui manquaient au Nigeria à l'époque, les profits générés par les ventes au « marché noir » encouragèrent les femmes à se lancer dans la contrebande.

Certaines de ces commerçantes ont été surnommées *Ikom Line Women*. Il s'agit d'un groupe de femmes originaires de Mamfe, qui exerçaient le commerce transfrontalier surtout dans les années 1980, lorsque l'activité informelle transfrontalière était en plein essor. Elles combinaient différentes sortes d'articles destinés à la vente, et avalent leur coin à elles au marché de Mamfe, et tous les articles qu'elles vendaient étaient achetés au marché d'Ikom. Ikom est la première grande ville de l'autre cote de la frontière nigériane, dans l'Etat de la Cross-River. Elle est située à 20 minutes de voiture du pont de Mfum sur la frontière, et tient un grand marché hebdomadaire tous les lundis. Les grossistes viennent avec des marchandises du Nord et d'autres régions du Nigeria, ainsi que de la zone d'Ikom, pour rencontrer des acheteurs venant du Cameroun et d'ailleurs. Bien que les acheteurs camerounais puissent pénétrer plus à l'intérieur du Nigeria, vers des marchés plus grands tels que Onitsha, Aba et Lagos pour acheter des marchandises de toutes sortes, la plupart des femmes entrepreneurs vont à peine plus loin qu'Ikom. Elles s'y rendent souvent le dimanche après-midi, font leurs achats au marché du lundi, et retournent le même jour au Cameroun⁴⁸³.

En plus des denrées alimentaires et des boissons alcoolisées, certaines femmes de Mamfe se sont impliquées dans la vente du carburant en provenance du Nigeria. Dans les années 1989, un bidon d'essence de 40 litres coûtait 1 500 francs CFA au Nigeria, et le transport par bateau à vapeur jusqu'au Cameroun 500 francs CFA. Le bidon rendu à Mamfe a vendu entre 2 500 et 3000 francs CFA. En 1997, le prix d'achat du même bidon au Nigeria, ainsi que les frais de transport et autres, s'élevaient à 5 000 francs CFA environ. En 2000, le

⁴⁸³ M. Niger-Thomas, « Les femmes et l'art de la contrebande », p.71.

bidon était vendu a7000 francs CFA a Mamfe⁴⁸⁴. Le carburant arrive du Nigeria était vendu aux détaillants, qui le revendaient ensuite le long de la route. Il devint une véritable affaire à Mamfe, en raison d'une part de la mauvaise liaison routière et de l'éloignement de la source du carburant camerounais, et d'autre part de la proximité du Nigeria et du fait qu'il y en avait beaucoup dans ce pays. En clair, la proximité du Nigeria et de son carburant meilleur marché, si que des moyens de transport plus faciles par le fleuve, constituèrent le soubassement économique de la contrebande.

Les femmes entrepreneurs de Mamfe développèrent et utilisèrent des stratégies pour frauder le fisc et continuer à accumuler des capitaux, en se livrant à des activités contrebandières. C'est ainsi qu'elles quittaient toujours Mamfe le jour pour le Nigeria, mais le plus souvent revenaient au Cameroun la nuit. Même si le bateau pouvait arriver dans la journée, il était parfois délibérément retardé pour éviter les contrôles policiers et douaniers à l'arrivée. La proximité du fleuve Manyu représentait donc un atout pour la contrebande. Un trait commun aux fournisseurs de carburant était qu'ils vivaient pour la plupart dans les quartiers au bord du fleuve.

La pratique était également courante chez les hommes d'affaires qui chargeaient de gros camions de marchandises du Nigeria à Bamenda (Nord-Ouest du Cameroun) et à Bafoussam (Ouest-Cameroun) par la route. Ils contrôlaient d'énormes capitaux, et géraient de grandes entreprises, contrairement aux petites entreprises et activités informelles des femmes.

Mais si la plupart des voyageurs prêteraient faire la navette entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria par la route, c'était l'inverse pour la majorité des femmes entrepreneurs qui, bien qu'elles puissent préférer la route, étaient souvent obligées d'emprunter la voie fluviale à cause des lourds chargements. Cela parce que ce moyen de transport était moins cher, certaines pirogues étant assez spacieuses pour pouvoir contenir des

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., p.59. Les prix du carburant sont très fluctuants, et assez souvent, ils sont déterminés par la situation au Nigeria, ainsi que les fournisseurs de carburants qui contrôlent eux-mêmes le prix marchand en dehors de toute intervention de l'administration.

articles en grosses quantités, A partir de 1995, la présence des femmes d'affaires bamiléké commence à se faire sentir. Au début, elles empruntaient plus souvent la route pour faire la navette entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria. Avec les routes constamment en mauvais état pendant l'hivernage, elles préférèrent de plus en plus voyager sur le fleuve Manyu.⁴⁸⁵

A chaque fois que la monnaie nigériane (le naira) se dépréciait, le taux de change était favorable aux commerçants camerounais, qui changeaient leurs devises au « marché noir ». Ainsi, pendant plusieurs années, les commerçants camerounais eurent l'avantage sur leurs homologues nigériens, en raison de la stabilité du franc CFA et de son taux de change plus élevé par rapport au naira. Cette situation encouragea un grand nombre de femmes à se lancer dans le commerce transfrontalier. Avec un petit capital initial, elles pouvaient acheter au Nigeria divers articles et les vendre au Cameroun avec une grande marge bénéficiaire.

L'instabilité politique entre le Cameroun et le Nigeria, notamment en ce qui concerne la crise de Bakassi, a intensifié le contrôle frontalier, et les agents en uniforme, en particulier du côté nigérien, ont renforcé le *settlement*. Cette situation a rendu les activités commerciales des femmes ayant un capital relativement faible très peu rentables. Nombre de ces femmes entrepreneurs qui avaient juste de quoi vivre ont été supplantées par les femmes d'affaires bamiléké, de véritables « géantes » depuis 1997, qui font maintenant la navette du Cameroun au Nigeria sur le fleuve Manyu.

Conclusion

Les affinités ethnolinguistiques dans les zones frontalières du Cameroun ont été responsables de la fluidité des migrations. Elles ont permis aux populations de poser un autre défi aux frontières coloniales. Ce défi n'est autre chose que le contrôle des mouvements transfrontaliers. Que ce soit pendant ou après la colonisation, toutes

⁴⁸⁵ Ministère de l'Agriculture. Actes du séminaire national sur les contraintes liées à la commercialisation interne et externe des produits vivriers, Yaoundé, SNAR, 1994.

les mesures prises par les administrations pour empêcher la circulation se sont avérées vaines dans les zones frontalières, Dans le meilleur des cas, elles n'ont fait que la ralentir légèrement.

Les échanges commerciaux entre le Cameroun et les Etats frontaliers, à travers les emplois qu'ils génèrent, sont une véritable soupape sociale dans la lutte contre la pauvreté et le chômage, car c'est le domaine d'une économie informelle dont l'importance n'est plus à démontrer.

L'étude des échanges commerciaux est susceptible de raviver l'attention des autorités nationales et internationales sur la nécessité d'une plus grande prise en compte du commerce comme moteur par excellence des dynamiques d'intégration. La promotion des échanges interafricains semble être la voie idéale vers la réalisation de l'intégration africaine qui peine à devenir une réalité depuis les années 1960 à cause des politiques et des clivages.

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Conflits et Fixation des Frontières en Egypte Pharaonique

By

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Résumé:

L'égyptien pharaonique dispose de deux concepts majeurs pour traduire l'idée de frontière ou d'une ligne frontalière. Il s'agit des concepts de  x  tasch¹ et  djer. Le concept de tasch renvoie à une limite frontalière tracée par les hommes ou par les divinités, d'où les expressions suivantes: oupi tasch «ouvrir la frontière»; semen tasch «établir la frontière»; seroudj tasch «fixer la frontière»; senkhet tasch «renforcer la frontière»; pekh tasch «atteindre la frontière»; tekek tasch «arriver à la frontière»; sousekh taschou «étendre les frontières»; khened her tasch ou tehi tasch «traverser la frontière»².

Le concept de tasch renvoie aussi au territoire, au marché, à la province. Il sert enfin à désigner une notion politique ou administrative concrétisée sur le terrain par une stèle³. Le scribe égyptien s'est servi de la graphie de la stèle pour rendre intelligible le concept:



Le concept de djer nous semble être beaucoup plus global et abstrait. Il traduit la zone, la région, le district, la circonscription, le quartier, le secteur, le rayon, la fin d'un territoire, le dernier objectif, la frontière d'où les termes djeri neheh «les deux frontières de l'éternité»; em djer ef «dans son domaine»; ta djer «la totalité de la région terrestre, la totalité de la région du monde, le coin le plus loin de la terre»; er djer nou pet «jusqu'à la frontière céleste»; ini er djer «faire avancer la frontière»⁴.

Les documents iconographiques, les textes autobiographiques, les annales des rois de la période thinite, de la quatrième, cinquième et sixième dynastie nous édifient sur les frontières naturelles de l'Egypte et sur celles qui ont été fixées à la suite de la naissance de l'état pharaonique. Il s'agit, à partir de ces différents documents, d'analyser le processus de fixation des frontières de l'état égyptien concomitamment aux besoins économiques.

Monts clés: Etat, Conflits, Frontière, Besoins économiques, Egypte pharaonique

¹ Terme qui apparaît théoriquement sur la stèle Berlin 14753 établie à Semna à l'an 8 du règne du pharaon Sésotris III:                

Abstract :

Pharaonic Egypt has two major concepts which stand for frontier or frontier line. These are the concept of  tasch and  djer. The concept of tasch refers to a frontier or boundary limit drawn by men or god on which were found the following expressions: oupi tasch "open the frontier"; semen tasch "demarcation of boundaries or establishing frontiers"; seroudj tasch "fixing of frontiers"; senkhet tasch "reinforcing frontiers"; pekh tasch "Reaching the Frontiers"; tekek tasch "arriving at the frontiers"; sousekh taschou "enlarging the frontiers or boundaries".

The concept of tasch also refers to territory, market or province. It was aimed at designating a political or administrative notion made visible on land by a Steal. Egyptian writers made use of graphics found on Steals to render their concepts more meaningful.

The concept of djer is more global. It refers to a zone, a region, a district, a circumscription, a quarter, an area, end of a territory, the last objective, frontier from where derives the following terms or terminologies: djeri neheh "the two frontiers of eternity"; em djer ef "in his domain"; ta djer "the totality of the earth surface, the totality of the Universe, the most distant part of the earth surface"; er djer nou pet "up to the earth limit or frontier"; ini er djer "pushing the frontiers behind".

Iconographic documents, autobiographic texts, the annals of the king of the thinite period, the fourth, fifth and sixth dynasty, do clarify us on the natural frontiers of Egypt and those which were arranged with the advent of the pharaonic states. From the different documents mention above, we intend to analyse the processes of establishing or fixing frontiers of the different Egyptian states vis-à-vis their economic needs.

Key Words: State, conflicts, Frontiers, economic needs, pharaonic Egypt

1. Introduction

Le document iconographique de la palette de Narmer véhicule les premières formes d'asservissement humain dont les voisins immédiats de l'Égypte ont été victimes. Le roi y est représenté, au recto comme au verso, armé d'une massue piriforme massacrant les ennemis de l'Égypte. Originnaire du sud, le pouvoir s'est consolidé au nord avec les travaux d'endiguement entamés sous le règne du pharaon scorpion portant la couronne blanche de la haute Égypte⁵, vêtu d'une tunique et d'un pagne à la ceinture duquel est attachée une queue de taureau, aménageant à l'aide d'une houe un canal, tandis qu'un homme emplit un couffin de terre et que d'autres s'affairent à proximité de l'eau à côté d'un palmier en pot⁶. Ce sont probablement ces travaux d'aménagement qui ont rendu habitables et exploitables les abords du delta. La capitale de l'Égypte unifiée s'est déplacée de Nehken à This, dans la banlieue d'Abydos. La naissance de l'État, la mise en place des institutions, l'officialisation de certains rites religieux comme la fête SED⁷, provoquent une logique de conquête et de colonisation des terres voisines. La volonté d'exploiter les richesses des pays limitrophes amena ainsi les pharaons de la période thinite, ceux de l'Ancien, du Moyen et du Nouvel Empires égyptiens à étendre les lignes frontalières du pays.

⁵ Emery, W.B., *Ägypten, Geschichte und Kultur der Frühzeit*, Wiesbaden, 1964, Abb.3.

⁶ Grimal, N., *Histoire de l'Égypte ancienne*, Paris, 1988, p.51.

⁷ Fête de renouvellement des forces ontologiques du roi telles que le Ba, le Ka et le Akh. L'Égypte avait besoin de l'encens, de la myrrhe et des plantes odoriférantes qu'il fallait trouver au pays de Pount et dans certaines villes de la Nubie antique.

Dans notre précédente étude⁸, nous nous sommes intéressé à l'importance de l'iconographie dans l'explication des faits marquant la naissance de l'état pharaonique. Il s'agit dans cette présente contribution d'insister sur la mise en évidence d'une idéologie royale mettant en exergue la conception et la légitimation de la guerre comme moyen d'apaiser la paix intérieure en Egypte et repousser les limites des frontières pour se procurer des produits indispensables pour la survie de l'état pharaonique.

2. La politique extérieure de l'Egypte à l'époque Thinite

L'iconographie de l'un des tous premiers pharaons d'Egypte tenant dans ses mains une arme en train d'écraser l'ennemi est présente dans tous les documents archéologiques datant de l'époque préhistorique à l'époque copte⁹. Dans une autre représentation provenant de la fresque murale de la tombe 100 du site d'Hérakonpolitain 33, datant de l'époque du Nagada IIC-D, on aperçoit le chef armé probablement d'un bâton en train d'abattre trois captifs en fuite¹⁰. La palette de guerre¹¹, dans le premier registre véhicule l'image de deux prisonniers qui ont l'apparence des asiatiques accrochés à deux piliers surmontés par deux oiseaux. Dans le deuxième registre, le roi apparaissant sous la forme d'un lion, monte sur un prisonnier, les autres en fuite sont en train d'être picorés par des oiseaux charognards¹². Ces événements politiques de l'époque préhistorique préfigurent la montée en puissance des tribus asiatiques qui menacent la stabilité du pouvoir pharaonique.

La fondation de Memphis par le pharaon Narmer marque le début de l'urbanisation. Capitale politique et résidence par excellence des pharaons de l'Egypte de l'Ancien Empire, Memphis est considérée dans l'historiographie égyptienne comme la place d'armes que tous Ethiopiens, Assyriens, Perses doivent enlever pour prendre possession de l'Egypte¹³. Dès la première dynastie, l'Egypte s'est intéressée au monde extérieur. Le pharaon Djer inaugure les hostilités. Il a laissé une inscription découverte dans la deuxième cataracte à la frontière égypto-soudanaise actuelle. Il amplifie la politique extérieure du pays en dirigeant des expéditions en Nubie jusqu'à Ouadi halfa, repoussant ainsi la frontière sud du pays jusqu'à Assouan, au niveau de la première cataracte¹⁴. Il aurait également mené des conquêtes probablement en Lybie et au Sinaï¹⁵. Cette politique extérieure s'est accentuée avec les pharaons de la quatrième, cinquième et sixième dynastie. Ils découvrent Byblos, commercent avec le pays de Pount et tentent de mettre la main sur la haute et la basse Nubie, d'où une nouvelle politique d'expansion menée par les pharaons de l'Ancien Empire.

⁸ Sarr, M.N. "A propos de l'iconographie de la palette de Narmer, in : *i-Medjat* no 4, Février 2010, pp.14-15.

⁹ Wildung, D., « Erschlagen der Feinde », in : *LÄ*, Band II, Wiesbaden, 1977, col.14-17.

¹⁰ Hornung, E., *Geschichte als Fest : Zwei Vorträge zum Geschichtsbild der frühen Menschheit*, Darmstadt, 1966, pp. 9-70. ; pl.3, Anselin, A., "L'entrée en scène de la langue dans les dispositifs de l'Egypte prédynastique", in : *i-Medjat* no3, Septembre 2009, p.2.

¹¹ L'écriture égyptienne nous montre l'image d'un homme assis la main gauche tenant un arc, la main droite une



flèche, sur la tête duquel est fichée une plume de guerre, la plume d'autruche. C'est cette image dont se sont servis les scribes pour écrire le nom des soldats *menfyt* et de l'armée *mescha*, Gardiner Sign-list A 12. L'autruche est un animal agressif. C'est ce qui explique, que ses plumes étaient associés dès l'époque prédynastique, de manière emblématique, aux chasseurs. A partir de la troisième dynastie, la plume est devenue à la fois un insigne des guerriers et des soldats : Behrens, P., « Straußenfeder », in : *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* Band 6, 1986, col. 78 ; Hendrickx, S., « Autruches et Flamants-les oiseaux représentés sur la céramique prédynastique de la catégorie Decorated », in : *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie* no1, février/mars 2000, p.42.

¹² Hornung, E., *ibid.*, 1966 : pl.1.

¹³ Yoyotte, Jean., « Memphis » in : *Dictionnaire de la civilisation égyptienne*, paris, 1992, p.169.

¹⁴ Hornung, E., *Grundzüge der ägyptischen Geschichte*, Darmstadt, 1965, p.15.

¹⁵ Grimal, N., *ibid.*, 1988, p.67.



« Ramener, de la terre des Libyens, prisonniers : 1100 ; bœufs et moutons : 13.100 »²².

Les textes de Khor-El-Aquiba qui probablement dateraient de l'époque du règne du pharaon Snofru, gravés sur deux rochers provenant du village de kasr Ibrahim, reviennent sur deux expéditions punitives en territoire nubien, menés par deux généraux égyptiens :

«Le chargé d'affaire du nome Oriental Septentrional (n. 19 de Basse Egypte), Zaouib. Saisir 17.000 Nubiens »²³. Le texte est beaucoup plus précis sur la composante de l'armée égyptienne et sur la ville nubienne visitée : «Le chargé d'affaire du nome du chien, Khâbaoubet. Il est venu avec une armée de 20.000 hommes pour raser Ouauat »²⁴.

Le Sinaï devient également la cible du pouvoir pharaonique à partir de la III^e dynastie. Les Egyptiens y allaient pour chercher le cuivre et la turquoise. Ils s'y rendaient par voie terrestre ou alluviale. Ces missions royales avaient été inaugurées par trois pharaons de la troisième dynastie en l'occurrence l'Horus Sanakht, l'Horus Nétjerikhet et l'Horus Sékhemkhet²⁵.

Les inscriptions du Sinaï à Wadi-Maghara stipulent que :



«Snéfrou, grand dieu, donner prospérité, stabilité, vie, santé, joie au coeur pour l'éternité,

Assujettir, soumettre, subjuguier, frapper les pays étrangers»²⁶.

Le document qui atteste la victoire du pharaon Kéops sur les peuples nomades du désert du Sinaï est également formel :



²² Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.237 :13; Roccati, A., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.40.

²³ Roccati, A., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.59.

²⁴ Roccati, A., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.59.

²⁵ Roccati, A., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.240.

²⁶ Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.8:2; Roccati, A., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.241.

²⁷ Sethe, *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.8:6. Les Iouitiou sont les fameux « Troglodytes ». Une vieille caractérisation des habitants du désert Sud-Est, isolés dans le Sinaï, dans le territoire de Hammamat et en Nubie (Wb. I, 55). Les textes parlent des Iouitiou-Séti, c'est-à-dire les nomades nubiens, une des composantes des peuples des neufs arcs : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p.35. Ils sont représentés en compagnie des Mentjou dans le temple funéraire du pharaon Sahouré, à Abousir : L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahu-ré II*, Ab. 19.

"khénémou-khoufou, grand dieu, frapper pour consacrer, les lountiou"

La cinquième dynastie connaît également des expéditions militaires. Celles-ci furent menées en direction du Sinaï par les pharaons Sahouré, Néousserré, Menkaouhor; de même qu'en Asie et en Libye. Le document retraçant la victoire d'un pharaon de la cinquième dynastie atteste de leur l'existence :



«grande dieu, seigneur des deux terres, roi de la haute et de la basse Egypte, les deux maîtresses de préférence, Horus d'or divin, Néousserré, fils de Rê, le cobra, frapper avec la massue piriforme les pays étrangers, frapper pour consacrer les Mentiou²⁹, frapper avec la massue piriforme les pays étrangers».



Le document qui confirme la victoire du pharaon , l'avant dernier roi de la cinquième dynastie sur les peuples du Sinaï, emploie les mêmes terminologies militaires pour asseoir idéologiquement la puissance de l'Egypte pharaonique sur ces peuples voisins :



²⁸ Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903 p.54 :1-5.

²⁹ C'est le nom d'un peuple sémitique habitant la moitié de l'île du Sinaï : Sethe, K., *Urkunden des 18. Dynastie*, Leipzig, 1914, p.3, note 1.). R. Hannig les décrit comme des Bédouins vivant dans le Nord-Est de l'Egypte. Ils sont peut être différents des *Mentions nou setjet* qui sont les Bédouins d'Asie : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p. 343 ou les Asiatiques : Meeks, D., *Année lexicographique : Égypte ancienne*, paris, 1998, p.122.



«Frapper les pays étrangers,

Frapper avec la massue piriforme, grand dieu, les Mentiou,

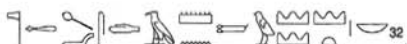
Frapper les pays étrangers».

Le monument du pharaon  provenant de la ville d'Eléphantine témoigne de sa puissance sur les peuples du Sud:



«roi de la haute et de la basse Egypte, Ounis, seigneur ou maître des pays étrangers, donner la vie, la prospérité, pour l'éternité».

Les inscriptions du pharaon  retrouvées à Wadi Maghara dans le désert du Sinaï reviennent sur son exploit militaire. Sur la tête d'un des prisonniers acquis à sa cause, on peut lire :



«bon Dieu, seigneur des deux terres, pépi, Horus forte de main, donner la vie, seigneur,

grand Dieu, frapper, écraser les Mentiou des pays étrangers».

La politique étrangère de l'Egypte s'est poursuivie sous le règne de Mérenrê. L'autobiographie de Ouni, un des gouverneurs de la haute Egypte, nommé par son père, retrace les combats de son seigneur contre les habitants du sable. Les frontières de l'Egypte sous son règne sont repoussées jusque vers la région syro-palestine, au sud d'Eléphantine dans le territoire nubien :

³⁰ Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.56:15-16.

³¹ Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.69:9-10

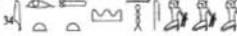
³² Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.91:10-11-12.

«Sa majesté repoussa les *Âamou* qui habitent le sable³³, après que sa majesté eut rassemblé une expédition très nombreuse de toute la haute Egypte, au sud d'Éléphantine, au Nord du nome d'Aphroditopolis, de la Basse Egypte, de (ses) deux Administrations entières, de Sédjer et de Khensédjerou (des endroits fortifiés ?), des Nubiens de Irjet³⁴, des Nubiens de Médja³⁵, des Nubiens de Yam³⁶, des Nubiens de Ououat³⁷, des Nubiens de Kaaou³⁸, de la terre des Tjémeh³⁹ ». Il ressort de ce texte que l'armée pharaonique avait bénéficié de l'appui des Tjémehous, Libyens et des troupes venant des différentes villes de la Nubie pour venir à bout des Asiatiques. Mieux, il révèle l'identité du groupe ethnique auquel appartenaient ces populations. Les Nubiens étaient réputés être de vaillants soldats sur le terrain de guerre.

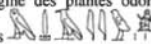
4. Les terminologies militaires de l'Egypte de l'Ancien Empire

³³ Il s'agit des *Âamou nou herou scha*, les nomades asiatiques : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p.130. Les *Herou-scha* sont désignés comme des Bédouins, des habitants du sable, die Sandbewohner : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995,

p.553. Nous avons à ce niveau un diptyque formé à partir de , *aâm* signifiant l'Asiatique, le Sémite, le Kanaanite, l'esclave syrien : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p.130.

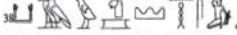
³⁴  *Irjet Nehesiou*, « Irjet, Gebiet der Nehesiu in Nubien, südlich vom Wadi Allaqi, Irjet, territoire des Néhésiyou, au sud de Wadi Allaqi » : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p. 1310.

³⁵  *Medja Nehesiou*, « Medja, Land bei Nubien auch als Herkunftsort der Wohlgerüche, Medja, terre en Nubie aussi lieu d'origine des plantes odoriférantes, c'est-à-dire du parfum »

(Wb.2 :186). Les habitants de ce territoire sont appelés les . Ils sont réputés d'être de vaillants soldats engagés dans l'armée égyptienne par Ouni, à l'époque des pharaons Têti et Mérenrê : Priglinger, E., « Historiographie der Ersten Zwischenzeit einst und heute », Diplomarbeit angestrebter akademischer Grad Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. Phil.), Universität Wien, 2010, p.57. A partir du Nouvel Empire, on recrutait parmi eux les policiers notamment pour la garde des nécropoles thébaines : Wb.II, 186, 9-10.

³⁶  *Ima Nehesiou*, « Ima, Yam, Gebiet in Nubien bei Kerma, Yam, territoire en Nubie, aux environs de Kerma. Ce territoire se situe au cœur de l'actuel Soudan, aux portes de la Centre-Afrique où habitent les pygmées Aka » (Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p. 1304 ; Sall, B., « Herkouf au pays de Yam », in : *ANKH, Revue d'Égyptologie et des civilisations africaines*, N° 4/5, 1995-1996 : 66).

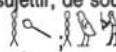
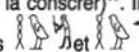
³⁷  *Ououat Nehesiou* « Ououat, Gebiet in Nubien, südlich von Assuan, territoire en Nubie au sud d'Assouan » : Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p.1323.

³⁸  *Kaaou Nehesiou* « Kaaou, Örtlichkeit in Nubien, une localité de la Nubie » (Hannig, 1995 : 1394). Le concept « nubiens » utilisé dans son sens géographique est la traduction du terme

pharaonique  *Nehesiou* désignant les habitants de la vallée du Nil au-delà de la première cataracte et tous les peuples vivant au Sud de l'Égypte : Seidlmayer, S.J., « Nubier im ägyptischen Kontext im Alten und Mittleren Reich » in : *Mitteilung des SFB 586 « Differenz und Integration » 2*, Universitäten Leipzig und Halle-Wittenberg, 2001, pp.90-113. Ils sont aussi assimilés aux nubio-soudanais : Sall, B. ; « L'image memphite des Nubio-soudanais. Une lecture historique » in : *ANKH, Revue d'Égyptologie et des civilisations africaines*, N° 8/9, p.32. La graphie déterminant ce concept, un homme à genou dont les bras sont attachés par derrière est repérable à partir des textes du Moyen Empire notamment sur les stèles Berlin 1157 et 14753 : Sethe, K., *Ägyptische Lesestücke. Texte des Mittleren Reiches*, Hildesheim, 1959, p.84, à une époque où les relations entre l'Égypte et la Nubie se sont pratiquement dégradées : Sall, B., « Egypte et Koush-les origines de l'hostilité » in : *Cahiers Caribéens d'Égyptologie*, N°3/4 Février/Mars 2002, pp.95-96. Dans les textes de l'Ancien Empire, les Nubiens sont représentés comme des dignitaires ayant la barbe et portant sur leur tête une plume d'autruche : Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.101 : 13-14-15-16. C'est à ce titre qu'ils étaient recrutés sans aucune contrainte majeure à côté de Ouni pour servir l'armée égyptienne. En l'an cinq du règne du pharaon Mérenrê, ce même Ouni organisa les assises d'Éléphantine en présence des souverains de Médja, de Irhet et de wawat, pour consacrer définitivement l'intégration de cette contrée, zone d'influence du dieu Khnoum, dans le royaume d'Égypte : Sall, B., « Les assises d'Éléphantine » in : *ANKH, Revue d'Égyptologie et des civilisations africaines*, N° 10/11, Paris, 2002, p.42.

³⁹  Sethe, K., *ibid.*, Leipzig, 1903, p.101 : 9-17 ; Rocatti, A., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.193,

Le roi est souvent armé d'un bâton, d'une massue⁴⁰ ou d'un poignard. Il peut être coiffé de la couronne blanche, de la couronne rouge mais également d'un bonnet afnet. Le terme égyptien afnet qu'on traduit par foulard ou turban vient du verbe afen signifiant être couvert, envelopper⁴¹. Le pharaon est décrit comme une personne vaillante ayant la main forte, tjemaâ⁴², maître de la puissance, neb khepesch⁴³. Il est celui qui écrase petpet⁴⁴ les peuples étrangers⁴⁵, qui les frappe khoui⁴⁶, seker⁴⁷ ou qui les soumet waf⁴⁸. L'idéologie royale perçoit l'Égypte comme étant le monde organisé par le démiurge dont le pharaon est l'héritier. Les pays étrangers du Sud, du Nord, de l'Ouest et de l'Est doivent donc le respecter et rester assujettis à son monarque⁴⁹. Le pharaon investi d'un pouvoir divin, se doit de massacrer l'ennemi pour repousser isefet, procéder à l'arpentage et à l'appropriation rituels des terres en vue d'amener maât l'ordre productif, source de vie⁵⁰.

L'idée d'abattre, de frapper, d'écraser, d'assujettir, de soumettre l'ennemi avec l'arme en main est exprimée à travers les concepts de :  khouwi,  kheba ou  dar et  seker. Le terme pharaonique khouwi signifie frapper, battre les ennemis, les pays étrangers⁵¹. Il peut être combiné à l'égyptien sedjeb, d'où l'expression khouwi-sedjeb, c'est à dire infliger une punition⁵². L'ennemi frappé peut faire l'objet d'un sacrifice rituel d'offrande. Ce qui peut être compris à travers l'expression pharaonique khouwi ar, « porte la main sur » (une offrande pour la consacrer)⁵³. Il convient ainsi de noter les similitudes phonétiques entre les termes techniques  det et  khouwi-a,

⁴⁰ L'arme en Égypte pharaonique a varié de l'époque préhistorique au Nouvel Empire. Elle était composée de différents éléments dont les massues creuses ou tronchées, les gourds, les haches, les poignards, les archets, les flèches, les frondes, les casques, les chars de combat, les chariots de combat : Helck, W., « Waffen », in : *kleines Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, bearbeitet von R. Drenkhahn, Wiesbaden, 1999, pp.324-326.

⁴¹ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Erster Band, Berlin, 1982, p.183 :1.

⁴² Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Fünfter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 367 : 6-7-8-9 ; p.368 :1 ; Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1982, p.426.

⁴³ Hannig, R., *ibid.*, mainz, 1995, p.596. Il s'agit d'une épithète royale. Le terme *khepesch* signifie bras, mais également force, puissance, Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.276.

⁴⁴ Copte *potpet* (dialecte sahidique) : *photphet* (dialecte bohairique) signifiant piétiner, piétiner les ennemis, Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.140. Le terme *petpet khaschout nebet* peut être traduit par « piétiner tous les pays étrangers », Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Berlin, 1982, p.563 :15-16.

⁴⁵ Les étrangers dont il est question sont les Asiatiques, les Libyens, les Nubiens, les *Mentious* et les *Iountious*

⁴⁶ Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.240.

⁴⁷ Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.349.

⁴⁸ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Erster Band, Berlin, 1982, p.285 : 1-2-3. Le concept apparaît dans les textes à partir du Moyen Empire et signifie courber le corps, subjuguer, soumettre, assujettir les Nations, d'où l'expression *wafkhaschout* « die Fremdländer bezwingen, soumettre les pays étrangers » : Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Berlin, 1982, p.285 :10. Ce qui probablement explique l'assimilation de cette expression aux noms de certains rois

égyptiens tels que Ramsès III ou d'autres pharaons. En *walaf*  signifie courber le corps en position assise en signe de soumission, attitude du captif ou de l'homme vaincu, subjugué, Diop, C.A. *Parenté génétique de l'égyptien pharaonique et des langues négro-africaines*, Dakar-Abidjan, 1977, p.186.

⁴⁹ Yoyotte, Jean, « Guerre », in : *Dictionnaire de la civilisation égyptienne*, Paris, 1992, p. 125.

⁵⁰ Menu, Bernadette citée par Silpa, Fabrice « Essai de construction d'une problématique de recherche sur la

 *maât* corpus documentaire », in : *Cahiers caribéens d'Égyptologie* no 13-14, 2010, p.157.

⁵¹ Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.240, Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.188, Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p.46

⁵² Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p.358.

⁵³ Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p. 242 ; Faulkner traduit le terme de cette manière « extending the arm in dedicating offering » : Faulkner, R.O., *A concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1991, p.165.

désignant le sceptre, la massue ou le bâton de commandement⁵⁴. Le terme kheba ou kheb signifie briser, détruire, dévaster notamment les champs⁵⁵. Il se rapproche du wafaf khep qui signifie abattre les herbes ou l'homme avec la machette. Le terme , dar est probablement une expression wafaf parce qu'il se rapproche du verbe dôr ou derr en wafaf signifiant frapper, battre l'ennemi, action de frapper fort⁵⁶. Il s'applique plus aux pays conquis qu'aux peuples soumis. Le concept , seker, battre, vaincre, défaire, peut être à la fois employé dans un contexte militaire, artistique, médicinale et rituel⁵⁷. Il s'agit d'un concept qui s'applique aux pays et peuples étrangers ennemis de l'Égypte dont il faut abattre la tête avec la massue piriforme⁵⁸. Dans le contexte militaire, , seker désigne le prisonnier parce qu'il est déterminé par un homme assis au genou dont les deux mains sont attachées par derrière⁵⁹. C'est à partir de cette expression que les Égyptiens ont formé , seker-ankh pour identifier les peuples prisonniers ennemis vivants de l'Égypte pharaonique disposés à être abattus⁶⁰. Au plan artistique, on l'emploie pour exprimer l'idée de battre le fer ou l'or pour faire des bijoux ou des amulettes⁶¹. Au plan médical, , seker signifie débarrasser du corps les maladies⁶², se faire délivrer des démons⁶³, séki en wafaf, c'est à dire extraire les épines du pied ou du corps. L'acte d'apporter le pain blanc est décrit comme texte de présentation de l'offrande, , seker-te-hd⁶⁴; , seker-oudenet, apporter une offrande, consacrer une offrande⁶⁵. Dans une scène de musique reproduite dans la tombe de Seschemnofers III⁶⁶, au dessus de la tête d'un des joueurs de la harpe, nous pouvons lire : , seker em binet, jouer de la harpe⁶⁷.

5. Conclusion

Tout laisse à croire qu'en Égypte pharaonique, le politique et le rituel vont ensemble. La conquête des pays étrangers par le pharaon est considérée comme un acte rituel pour écarter l'Égypte de ses ennemis. Le rituel de l'anéantissement⁶⁸ tel qu'il est exprimé à travers certains textes de l'Ancien Empire se dresse non seulement contre les ennemis internes et externes de l'Égypte mais aussi contre ceux de l'homme dans la vie d'ici bas comme celle de l'au-delà. L'événement qui occasionne la perpétuation de ce rituel n'est pas seulement la guerre mais également la fête de renouvellement des forces du roi, la fête du couronnement et celle célébrée à l'occasion de la fondation des temples. Les prisonniers ligotés sont assimilés aux oiseaux saisis à la limite des mailles des filets et dont les noms sont inscrits sur des figurines ou

⁵⁴ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Dritter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 49.

⁵⁵ Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p. 276.

⁵⁶ Diop, C.A., *Parenté génétique de l'égyptien pharaonique et des langues négro-africaines*, Dakar-Abidjan, 1977, p. 368.

⁵⁷ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 306.

⁵⁸ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 307: 1-2-3-4.

⁵⁹ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 307.

⁶⁰ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 307: 12.

⁶¹ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 307: 10-11.

⁶² Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 307: 7.

⁶³ Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p. 771.

⁶⁴ Erman, A. und Grapow, H., *ibid.*, Vieter Band, Berlin, 1982, p. 307: 9-10.

⁶⁵ Hannig, R., *ibid.*, Mainz, 1995, p. 228.

⁶⁶ Brunner-Traut, E., *Die altägyptische Grabkammer Seschemnofers III. Aus Gisa*, Mainz am Rhein, 1982, Beilage 4.

⁶⁷ Meeks, D., *ibid.*, Paris, 1998, p. 347.

⁶⁸ Schoske, Sylvia., « Vernichtungsrituale » in : *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Band VI, Wiesbaden, 1986, col. 1009-1012.

des poteries permettant aux magiciens de neutraliser leur force par la pratique de l'envoûtement⁶⁹.

Le pharaon, chef de guerre, est au centre des événements. Il a l'obligation de faire régner la paix interne pour instaurer la Maât, source de vie. Il se doit aussi d'étendre les frontières pour faire profiter à l'état pharaonique des richesses des autres pays limitrophes et lointains. Les textes autobiographiques, les inscriptions à l'étranger, les annales des rois de l'Egypte de l'Ancien Empire foisonnent de terminologies militaires dont l'exploitation sémantique peut faire l'objet d'étude pour se rendre compte du caractère guerrier du pouvoir pharaonique qui s'est exprimé à travers toute l'histoire politique de l'Egypte.

⁶⁹ Posner, G., « Ächtungstexte » in : *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Band I, Wiesbaden, 1975, col.67-69.

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Smuggling and Contraband Trade Across the Intra-Cameroon Boundary, 1916 -1945

By
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Abstract

This chapter discusses contraband trade as one of the methods or ways used by Africans to demonstrate their resistance to the artificial boundaries carved out by Europeans in Africa. The intra-Cameroon boundary divided polities and disrupted long distance trade practiced even before colonialism. The Cameroonians resisted or opposed this boundary by violating the fiscal barriers erected by the Anglo-French authorities. This resulted in a flourishing and lucrative contraband trade. Faced with increasing smuggling of goods from French Cameroon into the Southern Cameroons, the British reacted accordingly. A ‘war’ was declared against smuggling and the customs, police and local chiefs were mobilised to check this economic ‘cancer’. Unfortunately, the illegal trade continued and became a major post-Second World War worry for the colonial authorities. This chapter, drawing extensively from archival sources and quoting extensively from some of Fanso’s publications, attempts a rather succinct presentation of the origins of smuggling, British reactions and the obstacles that were confronted by the British Preventive Service. The paper concludes that abolition or eradication efforts were not commensurate to African determination and belief in the legitimacy of the trade. As such, smuggling across the Cameroon border survived the Second World War.

Résumé

Basée largement sur les sources archivistiques, cet article vise à montrer que la contrebande a été l'une des méthodes de la résistance africaine contre les frontières artificielles imposées par les colonialistes. Les frontières franco-anglaises au Cameroun avaient divisé les groupes ethniques et déstabilisé le commerce à longue distance. Les Camerounais violèrent ces frontières et les barrières fiscales franco-anglaises. Les résultats furent une contrebande florissante et profitable. Face à cette contrebande, les autorités anglaises ont réagi en déclarant une guerre contre les contrebandiers et fraudeurs. Malheureusement, ce commerce illicite persista et devint un problème majeur après la deuxième guerre mondiale. Cette étude examine les origines de la contrebande, les réactions des autorités anglaises et les difficultés vers l'abolition. Ce travail montre que les efforts fournis par les Anglais contre ce commerce étaient insuffisants pour l'éradication de ce fléau parce que les Camerounais croyaient que ce commerce était légitime.

Key Words: Smuggling, Contraband, Southern Cameroon Preventive Service, Customs

Introduction

When the First World War started in Europe in 1914, the Allied Powers immediately attacked and occupied all German colonies in Africa. German Kamerun, annexed in July 1884, was no exception. On March 16, 1916 the representatives of Britain and France signed an accord provisionally partitioning Cameroon. The Anglo-French partition of Cameroon was confirmed by the International Community (League of Nations) in 1922 and the “Picot Line”⁴⁸⁶ became an international boundary.

⁴⁸⁶The partition process started with a meeting between British diplomats led by Lancelot Oliphant and French diplomats led by George Picot in London in February 1916 and Oliphant is known to have asked Picot to draw a line on the map of Kamerun. This Picot Line (with some later modifications) became the boundary;

The Anglo-French boundary commission was instructed to “lay down the frontiers in accordance with natural features, rivers, hills and watersheds”.⁴⁸⁷ In the Southern (Cameroons) portion, the non-respect of ethnic, kingdom or traditional political frontiers produced important political and socio-economic consequences.

Ethnic groups and brotherly chiefdoms were divided. Chiefdoms, villages, and families were also divided. Polities with similar cultures were placed under different new colonial masters. Many communities were separated from their farmland or traditional source of food. The separation of ethnic related peoples with the same language, social and cultural norms also disrupted community life. Partition also disrupted traditional distance trade because the powers hurriedly imposed customs officials to patrol the borders. By so doing, many traditional local and distant markets became strictly foreign and were not more easily accessible, to traders on the other side of the border. It was in this context that smuggling and contraband trade developed between the two Cameroons and even became a threat to the economic stability of the Southern Cameroons.

This chapter attempts to trace the origin and development of smuggling and contraband trade in the Southern section of the intra-Cameroon borders, and the trade items, measures adopted by the British to eradicate this illegal trade and the problems encountered by the anti-smuggling campaign.

Origins and Reasons for Smuggling and Contraband Trade

The illegal and secret movement of goods across the intra-Cameroon boundary was observed quite early in 1916 and the British Resident Officer at Buea notified the custom officials and DOs. It should be recalled that following the defeat of the Germans and the partition of Cameroon, the British-Nigerian borders moved from that established as a result of the Anglo German treaty of 1893 to the Mungo and its hinterland following the partition accord of 1916 and

⁴⁸⁷E.A. Aka, *The British Southern Cameroons 1922-1961. A study in Colonialism and Underdevelopment*, Platte ville, Nkemnji Global Tech, 2002, p. 22.

the Milner-Simon Agreement of 1919. The British, therefore, needed time to move their frontiers and custom guards further to the East. In 1916, a customs service was set up at the borders with French Cameroon and a supervisor of customs appointed with headquarters in Victoria.

On August 6, 1916 the Resident Officer reacted to the increasing volume of illegal trade since 1914 (due to the war) by outlining certain sections of the Customs Tariff Ordinances used by the German in a letter the supervisor of customs, Victoria. The letter which was also coupled to the DOs of Victoria, Ossidinge and Bamenda, quoted sections 64 and 65 of the Ordinance as saying:

Whosoever undertakes to import, export or transport articles forbidden to be imported or transported in the customs territory or in a portion of it without first fulfilling the requisite conditions; is guilty of contraband. He is liable (in addition to the forfeiture of the articles) to a pecuniary fine amounting to from 4 to 10 times the value of the articles concerned. The minimum punishment being 50 marks...

Whoever undertakes to evade import or export dues is guilty of smuggling; and besides the forfeiture of the articles themselves concerned in the smuggling, is liable to a pecuniary fine amounting to from 5 to 15 times the value of the custom duties.⁴⁸⁸

The German Tariff of custom dues therefore remained in force in the Southern Cameroons until November 1, 1921 when a fiscal boundary was set up between the two Cameroons and the Nigerian Tariff replaced it.⁴⁸⁹

Immediately a fiscal boundary was established, both the British and the French set up custom stations on the major trade routes crossing the Anglo-French boundary. From 1916 to 1919, there were very few

⁴⁸⁸National Archives Buea (NAB), Pe/a/1961/1 Customs Miscellaneous, P. 3.

⁴⁸⁹A.N. Njume, "British and French Administration of Peoples on the Southern Borderlands of Cameroon. The case of the Anglo-French inter-Cameroon Boundary, 1916-1961", PhD Thesis, University of London, 2004, p. 122.

customs preventive posts along the provisional boundary. After 1922, when the partition was confirmed, many more customs and preventive control posts were opened along this border. These posts were at Victoria, Tiko, Misselele, Mudeka, Mpundu, Mombo, Mundane, Bombe, Ebude, MboNzié, Muesog, Nyan, Mwabi, Misso and Hunyopa.⁴⁹⁰ Also, the number of patrol and customs officers along the boundary increased as the years went by. Officers of the British preventive service were 67 in 1927, 99 in 1930 and 139 in 1939.⁴⁹¹

With this highly fortified borders and attempts by the two colonial administrations to control trade between the two Cameroons, the once-legitimate transactions turned into smuggling. In fact, smuggling originated and intensified after the imposition of new boundary and the enforcement of international rules and regulations restricting trade and normal interaction between African peoples.

A major factor which encouraged smuggling between the two Cameroons was the contrast between the French and British economic and trade policies. Although both powers, as indeed all colonial powers, tried to ensure as much as possible that the external and internal trade of their colonies was conducted with the metropolis or with metropolitan companies within the colony, the contrast in policies raised the problem of price dissimilarities. The result was the existence of cheap and expensive markets for European manufactures and African raw materials.⁴⁹² The British report to the League of Nations in 1929 mentioned the price difference as the cause of the wide extension of the contraband trade in many items. According to the report, “the very large difference in duty between the Cameroons under British and French mandate makes this trade highly profitable and it has grown to proportions inflicting serious loss of trade to local firms⁴⁹³”.

The two policies were as follows. In the name of ‘tariff

⁴⁹⁰Ibid, p. 121.

⁴⁹¹Ibid.

⁴⁹²V.G. Fanzo, “Trans-frontier Relations and Resistance to Cameroun-Nigeria Colonial Boundary 1916-1945”, Doctorat d’Etat Thesis, University of Yaounde, 1982, p. 318.

⁴⁹³British Annual Report to League of Nations, 1929, p. 10.

assimilation' the French extended to their colonies the tariffs protecting French industry, thereby effectively forcing the colonies to buy French products and to sell their produce to France at world market process⁴⁹⁴. This meant that African products in French territories received a higher protected price when they were sold in France, although prices for imported French goods might be higher. By contrast, the British policy of importing European goods from the cheapest possible sources imposed relatively low import duties but fairly high export duties. This was in spite of the fact that British firms operating in the colonies naturally procured their own requirements from British sources. But, unlike the situation in French Cameroon there was no policy preventing foreign firms from operating in British Cameroons, and no strict measures were taken to divert colonial trade into British channels. The result was that while Southern Cameroonians could buy imported goods cheaper at home, they could not obtain high prices for their raw materials. Smugglers therefore acquired African products from the Southern Cameroons and sold in French Cameroon at higher prices. They also smuggled French products into the Southern Cameroons because the Africans were often "more attracted to the fancy but highly prices French products than to the not-so-bright 'firm' and cheap British imports".⁴⁹⁵ The general tendency was therefore for smugglers to sell African products in French Cameroons and also buy French imports there.

Smuggling was an illegal trade in the eyes of both the French and the British administrations; it was, on the other hand, a risky and profitable trade in the eyes of the Cameroonians. These Cameroonians never regarded smuggling as unlawful and illegal. They considered taxation and other exactions wrong and so felt free to earn the money for them the way colonial masters did not like. Also, it was a challenge to the authorities and an exciting adventure. Many smugglers compared their 'new profession' to a great hunt concluding that it was manly and profitable because smugglers became rich in money and

⁴⁹⁴ Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 319.

⁴⁹⁵ Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 320.

property.⁴⁹⁶

British and French economic and trade policies notwithstanding, contraband trade was, first and foremost, a form of African resistance to the artificial boundary. The African notion of border was different. The Africans did not consider the border as a fiscal barrier. Their borders were fluid and did not restrict trade or movements. It was this African concept of borders that guided contraband trade.

Contraband Items and Routes

Contraband trade across the intra-Cameroon boundary was conducted in many items. In the grassland area of the region, large scale smuggling was carried out in cattle, currency, palm oil, tobacco, cigarettes and French matches. Cattle dealers easily grazed their herds across the frontiers to the side where the cattle market was good, almost always avoiding the payment of duty on them.⁴⁹⁷ Cattle dealers were also smugglers of currency. They carried out black market exchange of the Franc causing a depreciation of the Franc and inflation in French Cameroon.

Palm oil was smuggled by Bangwa, Bali and Bikom traders to French Cameroons. Bangwa smugglers got palm oil from Mamfe producers and marketed in Dschang and Nkongsamba. Bikom traders bought palm products from Mbembe markets and carried them all the way to Nkongsamba where the prices were higher.⁴⁹⁸ Bali smugglers took oil to Bawaju and returned with French matches, ciga, cigarettes and tobacco. These products from French Cameroons were further transported to Widikum, Mamfe and Kumba or Calabar where demand was high.⁴⁹⁹

In the cash-crop growing areas of the south, smuggling was carried out in cocoa, coffee, British cloth, ciga, cigarettes, tobacco, kerosene, and hot drinks. Bamileke, Mbo, Bakossi and Douala smugglers took

⁴⁹⁶Ibid, p. 333.

⁴⁹⁷Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 330.

⁴⁹⁸Ibid, p. 321.

⁴⁹⁹NAB File Pe/a 1921/6.Smuggling of Cigarettes, p. 11.

cocoa and coffee to Nkongsamba and Douala markets where prices were high. These smugglers took with them on their journey to Douala a supply of British printed cloth goods the proceeds of which when sold were used to purchase tobacco and cigarettes which in turn were smuggled to the Southern Cameroons. British print goods were more popular not so much because of the price but because they were of superior quality and design.⁵⁰⁰

A coast-to-coast smuggling in various items of trade between the two Cameroons was also voluminous. The items involved were tobacco, cigarettes, hot drinks, British cloth and *gari*. Coast-to-coast smuggling between Douala, Victoria and Calabar was largely promoted by the vast differences in custom duties and prices. For example, in 1928, the cost price of a case tobacco weighing 200lbs in Calabar and Victoria was £33.15 while the same case in Douala cost £14.10. The average canoe engaged in the smuggling trade carried about 15 cases of tobacco, costing the purchaser at Duala about £218. The price of this cargo in Calabar and Victoria was between £505 and £510. A smuggler could therefore dispose of his goods easily and quickly to his recognised purchaser for say £400, thereby making a profit of nearly £200 on his trip.⁵⁰¹ In addition to this, the smuggler, on his return, carried a cargo of *gari* for sale at Duala where there was a great demand for food at very high prices.

Before 1928, it was noticed that the amount of tobacco imported at Calabar and revenue collected on duty was dropping. In 1925, 614.755 pounds of tobacco was imported and £40.603 collected on duty. In 1926, 484.714 pounds of tobacco was imported and £26.596 collected on duty. In 1927, the figures stood at 504.980 pounds of tobacco and £27.423 as revenue on duty.⁵⁰² This shows that the revenue derived from duty on tobacco at the Calabar port decreased by no less an amount than £14.007 in 1926 and by £13.180 in 1927. 75% of this lost was due entirely to the quantity of tobacco which found its

⁵⁰⁰NAB, File Pela1933/1 Eastern Frontier Preventive Service: Quarterly Report 1933, p.7

⁵⁰¹NAB, File Pela1928/1 smuggling of tobacco, p. 7.

⁵⁰²Ibid.

way into the province from French Cameroon without passing through a custom revenue station.⁵⁰³

Revenue from custom duties continued to drop and by 1954 when Southern Cameroons was granted some form of autonomy, the situation was alarming. 'In a letter to all DOs on December 2, 1954, the Commissioner J.O. Field remarked that,

The population of the Southern Cameroons is almost 2 that of the Federation of Nigeria. The Southern Cameroons consumption of the most popular locally manufactured cigarettes however is only 0.1 % of the federations. Smoking a smuggled cigarette is, I Suppose, a rewarding experience. Not only is it lighter on one's pocket but also there is perhaps a feeling of satisfaction at having got one across the custom.

... Each smuggled cigarette burns a hole in our revenue. The Southern Cameroon revenues are short of thousands of pounds because of the evasion of customs.⁵⁰⁴ This observation made in 1954 may sound as if the British did not wage a war against contraband trade. On the contrary, the campaign against smuggling was vigorous and fruitful even if the trade remained a major headache to colonial officials for a long time after the Second World War.

The British Anti-Smuggling War

In 1916, the British positioned some customs and preventive service men along the Anglo-French provisional boundary. Between 1919 and 1945, the number increased greatly because of the volume of trade and the great importance Britain attached to customs revenue. In 1922, the Nigerian Eastern Preventive Services was set up in the Cameroons province. It consisted of customs preventive men with a strong preventive police force under the customs and police

⁵⁰³Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴Ibid, p. 43.

departments.⁵⁰⁵

In order to better fight illegal trade, numerous customs and preventive posts were established along the frontier from the Bimbia waters to the grassland hinterland of the region. By 1927, there were 17 permanent and semi-permanent posts along the entire eastern frontier of the Cameroon province.⁵⁰⁶ The permanent posts on the frontiers in 1936 were: Victoria, Tiko and Mpundu, catering for preventive services along the coast, the Mungo delta, Missellele and Balong country; Mundame for the frontier from Bakundu to Bafaw; MboNzié, from Bafaw through Nyasoso to Bakossi country; Nyan and Misso, for Bakossi; Hunyopa for Mbo; and Foto and Mundani for Bangwa and Mundani frontiers. From Mundani to the end of the Bamenda Division frontier in Nwa (Kaka), the major posts were Santa, Bamum Kumbit and Bangola.⁵⁰⁷ The semi-permanent posts were at Fossongo, Bamumdu and Bel.

In 1929 the Easter Preventive Service was divided into two: The Northern and Southern Divisions. The southern half was from Man O'War Bay in the Victoria Division to Ndor Mungo in the Kumba Division, the actual extreme posts being Bimbia in Victoria and Nyan, Elung in Kumba. The northern half was from Illaw in Kumba Division to Bamunka in Bamenda Division with extreme posts being Illaw and BamumKumbit.⁵⁰⁸ These two sections were headed by two European commissioned officers and a European customs officer. They were assisted by non-commissioned officers who numbered 67 in 1927, 99 in 1930 and 138 in 1939. Of the 138 non-commissioned officers in 1939, 46 covered the frontier from Santa to Nwa and the rest patrolled the Mamfe, Kumba and Victoria frontiers.⁵⁰⁹

The task of the frontier men was to patrol the frontier regularly, arrest and bring to justice Cameroonians and Nigerians smuggling goods across the borders. In 1927, 68 persons were arrested and tried

⁵⁰⁵Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p.325.

⁵⁰⁶Annual Report for the Year 1927, p.94.

⁵⁰⁷Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 326.

⁵⁰⁸NAB File PelaI929/1, Preventive Service and Contraband, p.14.

⁵⁰⁹Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 329.

for smuggling offences, and all but 6 were convicted and punished. In 1930, 238 were convicted and in 1930 there were arrests and 748 persons were convicted. In 1937 and 1938 the number of smugglers convicted dropped to 340 and 293 respectively.⁵¹⁰ The increase in the number of arrests during the years before 1938 may be attributed to the watchfulness of the preventive men.’ It may also be attributed to the larger number of inexperienced smugglers joining the trade. In 1936 the British report to the League of Nations alluded to this fact when it mentioned that there was an increase in “petty smuggling” in the territory⁵¹¹. The drop in the number of arrests or convicts from 1938 resulted from other measures that gradually rendered smuggling less lucrative.

The arrest of smugglers was followed by the seizure of their cargo. In 1929 the summary of seizures of contraband goods on sea and land was as follows: 9.688 heads of tobacco valued at £270, 225 dice of cigarettes valued at £86 and 386,307 national cigarettes values at £289. The amount realised by the sale of other seized goods was £234⁵¹². In 1933, the seizures by March were as follows: 2.810 heads of tobacco and 64.468 dice of cigarettes.⁵¹³ Seizures were carried out when traders failed to produce receipts and custom papers for their goods. The smugglers were both intercepted and caught as they came over the frontier, in the markets where they eventually sold the goods or on the routes taken from the frontiers to those markets. Some contraband seizures were supply picked up when smugglers abandoned them in the bushes.

Officials of the customs and preventive departments stormed the open markets in the villages in jeeps and land rovers and seized all suspected contraband goods they could find. In 1929, Bali market was raided, 48 smugglers arrested and confiscated goods sold at £15.⁵¹⁴ On

⁵¹⁰Joseph L. Nfi, “French Cameroonians in the Politics of the Southern Cameroons, 1922 - 1961”, DEA Dissertation, University of Yaounde 1, 2007, p. 78.

⁵¹¹Annual Report for the Year 1936.

⁵¹²NAB, File Pe/a1928/1; Smuggling of tobacco, p. 60.

⁵¹³NAB, File Pe/a 193311 Easter Frontier Preventive Service, p. 9.

⁵¹⁴NAB, File Pe/a 192911, Preventive Service and Contraband, p. 3.

June 4, 1936 Mr. H.P.G. Hodgkinson, assistant superintendent of police organized another raid on the Banso market. He surrounded the market with police and carriers on every side. Every road was blocked and goods were snatched away by the police. Seized goods includes; local made gowns, salt, ropes of beads, Wukari-made clothes, Takum-made towels, umbrellas, wrappers and locally made cutlasses.⁵¹⁵ Not only markets were raided. Private homes and hideouts of smugglers were also targeted. On October 6, 1927, Mr. P.C. Mababa led a preventive team into the home of John Mulobe taking away 4 demi Johns of Wine containing 30 litres each. Sam Eyong of Banyangi and James Ebam of Bendege were also arrested at Muyuka beach on December 25, 1932 with smuggled articles valued at £13. Each time a raid was organised in the open markets or private homes of suspected smugglers, the smugglers either lost all their goods by confiscation or were forced to pay more than the required duty on each item in order to legalise their sale in the country. In 1924, Priso Tombi the representative of the Duala community in Tiko wrote to the Resident Officer Buea complaining about the custom harassment of his people and the exorbitant duties on their goods.⁵¹⁶ Such complaints about customs and police harassments were common because these raids rendered the Eastern Preventive Service very unpopular.

Cigarette was one of the principal items of contraband trade between the two Cameroons. It was cheap in the French territory because of low custom duties and many traders therefore smuggled it into the British territory where the prices were higher. In December 1928, the British American Tobacco Company decided to arrange that all tins of cigarettes shipped to French Cameroon shall bear the letters CA and the letters appear where the flange of the lid of the tin meets the body of the tin.⁵¹⁷ Therefore, all such cigarettes in the Southern Cameroons were seized and the owners prosecuted. This reform permitted the preventive men to successfully seize reasonable quantities of smuggled cigarettes in the 1930s. In 1929, 59.225 dice of

⁵¹⁵NAB, File Pe/a 193711, Raid on Banso Market, p. 4.

⁵¹⁶NAB, File TC/191611, Priso Tombi to Resident Buea, Jan 15, 1924.

⁵¹⁷NAB File Pe la 1921/6: Smuggling of Cigarettes, p. 7.

cigarettes worth £86 and 386.307 national cigarettes worth £289 were seized. In 1933 the quantity of seized cigarettes increased to 154.378 heads.

Following spectacular results recorded by the police and customs in the seizure of contraband in 1929, and with the increasing number of smugglers, the Resident Cameroon Province decided to reward police for seizure of contraband. He stated clearly that such reward “should only be asked for when exceptional, dangerous or arduous services have been rendered”. Services may be considered as exceptional when such qualities as courage, skills, determination and devotion to duty are displayed or when they have been performed in the face of great difficulties, hardship or dangers⁵¹⁸. Reward was also extended to the informants who were employed by the frontier police from time to time to give information on the hideout of smugglers. In this connection, £100 was placed at the disposal of European Officers engaged in the prevention of smuggling to enable them to reward private individuals whose information resulted to the capture of smugglers or smuggling canoes in 1929.⁵¹⁹ Also, the chiefs who were ready to lecture against smuggling and/or provide carriers for the evacuation of seized or abandoned contraband goods were give ‘Dash’ when the goods were auctioned. This made village chiefs to be ready to assist the British in the war against smuggling.

A successful campaign against smuggling also needed French collaboration. The French also erected custom barriers along the frontiers that regulated the movement of goods, currency and people across the borders. In 1933, the French introduced a licence or ‘patent’ of 400frs on all goods from British Cameroons and smugglers who were unable to pay had their goods seized. In 1933, the enforcement of this licensing law was particularly strict in the Duala area as many smugglers from Tiko creek areas were forced to abandon their activities because of this law.⁵²⁰ In 1936, there was a significant decline in tobacco seizure because the French authorities tightened up their

⁵¹⁸NAB File Pe /a 1929/1: Preventive Service and Contraband, p.12.

⁵¹⁹NAB, File Pe/a 1929/2, Smuggling and Smugglers in Cameroon, p.11.

⁵²⁰NAB, File Pe/a 1933/1, Quarterly Report 1933, p.7.

regulations and itinerant traders passing across the boundary were required to produce laissez-passers, health certificates, and tax discs.⁵²¹ Also, the system employed by the German firms of giving credit slips on the local factories to their employees in lieu of pay also reduced the demand for contraband tobacco in the local markets. In fact the agents of Messrs John Holt and UAC in Victoria assured the custom supervisors in 1936 that their sales of tobacco were satisfactory and it was assumed that the smuggling of tobacco in large quantities was no longer a profitable business.

This was an assumption because contraband trade between Duala, Victoria and Calabar was gaining in intensity. In 1929, an increasing colony of Duala, Calabar and other African strangers settled in Bamusso to take part in tobacco smuggling from Duala to Calabar.⁵²² The British response was to place motor-launches at the disposal of the Assistant Commissioners of the Preventive Services in Victoria in an effort to facilitate movement by patrol along the coast and on the Mungo, Rio del Rey and Cross Rivers and the Creeks. Between 1931 and 1934, the coast of Cameroon had three patrol vessels, the “Argus”, “Galleway” and “Vigilant”. During this period, virtually no smuggling by sea took place, as the risk of detection was too great and the risk of loss of both cargo and canoes one which smugglers were not prepared to take.⁵²³ Unfortunately, these vessels could not function after 1934 and smuggling resumed. In 1938, the coordinating officer, Eastern Preventive Service, Victoria wrote to the controller of customs Lagos complaining of increasing smuggling due to lack of a craft for sea patrol. He said:

Smuggling by sea is now rampant, some 15 to 20 canoes a month pass Victoria for Suella Bar bound west by day probably many more by night and I have nothing to intercept them with only a very few of these calls at Tiko or Victoria.⁵²⁴

⁵²¹AB, File Pe/a 1936/1, Quarterly Report 1936, p. 3.

⁵²²NAB, File Pe/a 1928/1, Smuggling of tobacco, p. 21.

⁵²³NAB, File Pe/a 1938/1, Smuggling, p. 1.

⁵²⁴Ibid.

He also remarked that “the fairly recent devaluation of the Franc and the very low value of the pound have given an additional impetus to smuggling and adequate sea patrol was necessary. This 1938 report of the coordinating officer, Eastern Preventive Service was an indication that the war against smuggling was difficult and plagued by serious problems.

Problems Encountered

The mission of the preventive police was very difficult and this service became the most unpopular British service during the inter war years. The major problem came from the overzealous elements of this force that harassed the Africans provoking complaints and petitions. For example, in 1931, the Mbo Native Authority complained against Mr. Ezali, Chief of Post of Hunyopa who forced a gang of carriers to take seizures from Mbo land to Victoria without payment. The village head of Fonjungo also accused him of increasing duties on palm oil per kerosene tin for export over the French border from 6d to 9d and for interfering with petty barter trade in kola nuts.⁵²⁵ Elsewhere, it was the medical officer for Bansa, R. Leclezio who petitioned the DO for Bamenda following the raid on Bansa market organised by Mr. H.P.G. Hodgkinson in November 1936.⁵²⁶ After the raid, 42 suspects were detained and locally produced goods like gowns and cutlasses were seized and auctioned. Such officers who could not distinguish between legal and illegal goods and who failed to compensate local porters made the Africans to resist the anti-smuggling campaign.

Overzealous officers also provoked diplomatic crisis between the British and French colonial officials as they frequently transgressed the frontiers in hunt of smugglers. In December 1927, the French government complained about Mr. P.C. Mababa of Kumba who committed a serious transgression of the international boundary on October 6, 1927. He was accused of; the arrest of Albert Songo and two others without proper cause on the British beach of Mbalangi,

⁵²⁵NAB, File Pe/a 1927/2, Preventive Services, Eastern Frontiers, p.8.

⁵²⁶NAB, File Pe/b 1937/1, Raid on Bansa Market, p. 8.

crossing the River Mungo and landing in French territory, entering the house of John Mulobe and taking away 4 demi Johns of wine containing 30 litres each and firing his rifle on French territory.⁵²⁷

This crisis led to an exchange of correspondences between the Resident at Buea and the D.O. Duala. The Resident forced Mababa to return Mulobe's canoe and pay for the wine. Such crisis affected negatively Franco-British collaboration in the fight against contraband trade.

The infrastructure and personnel at the disposal of the Preventive Service was fragile and inadequate. The customs and police buildings were inherited from the Germans and were in a very bad state. The 1933 report indicated that about £80 was required to repair the buildings after an exceptionally severe tornado which carried away the roofs of some buildings in Victoria, Mpundu and Tiko and completely destroyed the MboNzié Station.⁵²⁸ The rest house of Mundame, used as a headquarter office as well, which was the corrugated iron kitchen and boy's quarter of an old German factory was condemned as a habitation by the Deputy Director of Health Services Dr. Peacock in 1933. In the grassland, custom stations were often burnt down by bush fires. This was the case in BamumKumbit in 1936. The health of the police personnel was also a problem. In 1933, 14 were sick and hospitalised, while one died. Their major health problem was malaria. With these practically uninhabitable police rest houses, dilapidating stations, and inadequate man-power, smugglers continued to overpower the preventive services.

The task of the preventive service was also complicated by the length of the frontier and the wooded creeks along the coast. The frontier was too long and country mountainous and difficult. As such, smugglers with a certain amount of initiative had much in their favour to help them break through unobserved. Smugglers therefore carried their goods across the frontiers at night through secret tracks. In other instances, smugglers were aided by border farmers, particularly neighbourhood women, who crossed the boundary several times in the

⁵²⁷NAB, File Pe/a 1927/2, Preventive Service: Eastern Frontier, p. 16.

⁵²⁸NAB, File Pe/a /1933/1, Quarterly Report 1933.

same day. These farmers transported several contraband in their farm baskets and bags in broad daylight, as if they were only carrying their harvest back home.⁵²⁹ Farm and market women in Bamileke, Mbo and Bakossi land were very useful in this smuggling because unlike men, women were not required to obtain travel papers to cross the border.

Also, traders returning from French Cameroon with contraband organised themselves in armed groups and defiantly approached customs posts and patrol stations determined to fight and kill if stopped by the customs, rather than lose their goods or pay duties.⁵³⁰ This was the case with Kom, Ndop and Bali smugglers who attended Nkongsamba market. When not in armed groups, the smugglers sometimes produced receipts for a totally different set of goods and the preventive men being illiterates and seeing the custom stamps had to let him go⁵³¹. Smuggling therefore also persisted because many of the preventive men were illiterates.

Along the coast, the sea-going smugglers were known to be mostly men of Calabar Province who were generally financed by wealthy indigenes of Abonema and Degema in Owerri Province.⁵³² Due to the creeks between Duala and Rio del Rey, these smugglers used secret anchorages along the Cameroon coastline as temporary halting places during bad weather. They easily eluded the customs and preventive men. In the 1920s and 1930s, the British preventive services were finding it difficult to cope with the problem of detecting and arresting the large sailing canoes used in the illegal trade along this coast because of these creeks.

Another non-negligible problem was that of recruiting, feeding and paying carriers of seized goods. This increasingly became a problem in the 1930s as many smugglers who feared prolonged detention and torture, abandoned their goods when caught and escaped. The abandoned goods had to be taken to the nearest custom station for safe custody, and if the contraband loads were too numerous or too

⁵²⁹ Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 336.

⁵³⁰ Ibid, p. 337.

⁵³¹ NAB, File Pe/a 1929/2, Smuggling and Smugglers in Cameroon, p.23

⁵³² Fanso, "Trans-frontier Relations", p. 331.

heavy for the police to handle, they applied through the custom officer in the absence of any European police or administrator, for the assistance of the village head in providing porters. Many chiefs became reluctant to provide these porters because they were not often fed or paid.⁵³³ Some chiefs even accused the preventive service of promoting slave labour. These complaints were common in Mamfe Division where seized contraband had to be carried from Hunyopa in Mboland to far-away Victoria.

Perhaps the success of the smugglers during the inter war years could be attributed to the consumer behaviour in the Southern Cameroons. Senior civil service officials were identified as consumers of cigarettes from French Cameroons. In fact, the D.Os were in the “racket themselves” as many of them were smoking smuggled cigarettes. The commissioner was, forced to react in 1954 when in a letter to all D.Os he said ‘We cannot as government officials both preached against smuggling and enjoy the benefits provided by smugglers’.⁵³⁴ District Officers were called upon to invite all administrative officers and departmental officers to stop smoking if not they shall be sanctioned.

However, like other goods, “Nigerian” cigarettes was not also available in some parts of the Southern Cameroons, for example, Mamfe and when the cigarettes was bought from Enugu, it was the East Province that benefited from the excise duty rather than the Southern Cameroons.⁵³⁵ The “Bicycle” and “Bandmaster” cigarettes from Nigeria only became popular when the fight against cigarettes especially National cigarettes from French Cameroon intensified from 1936.

Conclusion

When the Anglo-French boundary became permanent in 1922, traditional long distance trade was greatly interrupted. The Africans

⁵³³NAB, File Pe/a 1927/2, Preventive Service: Eastern Frontier, p. 15

⁵³⁴NAB File Pe /a 1921 /6, Smuggling of Cigarettes, p.43.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

considered the boundary as artificial and illegal. Consequently, African traders resisted the fiscal boundary by smuggling tobacco, cigarettes, kerosene, matches, cigar and hot drinks from French Cameroons to the Southern Cameroons. Cocoa, coffee, clothes, gun powder, *gari* were also smuggled from Southern Cameroons to French Cameroon. Smuggling also became lucrative because of the differences in the economic and trade policies of the two powers - Differences that made the prices of African products high and the prices of European manufactures low in French Cameroon.

British response to the increasing contraband trade was energetic. The Eastern Preventive Service was set up and the frontier/coastline guarded. Markets were raided, contraband seized and smugglers tortured and jailed. The French were invited to increase duties on cross border trade and vessels acquired to check coast-to-coast smuggling but the trade persisted and survived the Second World War.

The anti-smuggling war was less successful because the Africans were determined to benefit from this lucrative trade which they considered “legitimate”. The geography of the frontier and the coastline did not permit the Prevention Service to achieve much. Lastly, the preventive men were inadequate, brutal and inconsistent in their policies. Contraband trade, therefore, remained a great headache to British colonial authorities at the beginning of their Trusteeship mission in Cameroon.

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La Guerre des Voies de Communications au Cameroun (1914-1916)

Par

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Résumé

Le déclenchement de la première guerre mondiale en Europe inaugure une période d'incertitude un peu partout dans le reste du monde. La présence allemande en Afrique depuis 1884 est un signe annonciateur au regard des stratégies orchestrées par les puissances européennes, notamment à travers la construction des blocs et la course aux armements. Au Cameroun, la guerre qui se déroule sur le terrain oppose l'Allemagne au corps expéditionnaire franco-britannique. Les batailles les plus décisives se déroulent sur la maîtrise des lignes du chemin de fer et des routes. Ces chemins matérialisent les frontières physiques et les fronts déterminants au cours de cette période entre Allemands, Anglais et Français. Les voies de communication et la guerre traduisent également la trace des frontières idéologiques et militaires au Cameroun au cours de la période,

Mots clés: Première guerre mondiale, Allemagne, France, Angleterre, chemin de fer, frontières, fronts, route.

Introduction

Le déclenchement de la guerre de 1914 en Europe a également eu des répercussions dans le reste du monde, notamment les colonies allemandes, expressions des réactions chauvinistes du partage du

monde et des affaires d'outre-mer⁵³⁶. Au Cameroun, les nouvelles voies de communication d'abord au service de l'impérialisme allemand, deviennent bientôt un enjeu géostratégique, lieu de pénétration militaire et de passage des troupes allemandes allées. Désormais, la maîtrise de ces voies devait l'objectif à atteindre par tous et s'inscrit à contrecourant d'une volonté du progrès.

Au cœur de ce drame planétaire, le *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* et la *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* publient des séries de documents consacrés au Cameroun tout au long de la période 1914-1916.⁵³⁷ Malgré de nombreuses précautions, l'Allemagne ne peut éviter la guerre dans ses colonies. Les moyens de transport qu'elle a mis sur pied ne risquent-ils pas de se retourner contre les initiateurs de ces projets? L'ordonnance du 4 septembre 1914 interdit aux populations le port de l'uniforme et des tenues étrangères, les tenues d'une administration étrangère ou autres signes provenant des pays étrangers (art. 1)⁵³⁸, la limitation des sorties d'argent, du territoire⁵³⁹, ce qui donne la mesure du climat de tension qui règne au Cameroun. « Les transferts d'argent à l'extérieur dépassant la somme de 100 Mark sont interdits à travers les banques allemandes, étrangères ou la banque anglaise (art. 1). Les contrevenants seront punis de trois mois d'emprisonnement; toute tentative d'enfreindre a cette réglementation est passible des mêmes peines (art.3)⁵⁴⁰ ».

En revanche, les contrevenants à la réglementation sur le port des tenues étrangères devraient s'acquitter du paiement de 600 Mark

⁵³⁶ Sur cette guerre, on trouve une documentation est énorme. Il ne s'agit pas ici de la reproduire ; on pourra cependant se référer à R. Poidevin, Les origines de la Première guerre mondiale, PUP, Paris, 1975; J. Droz, Les causes de la première guerre mondiale.

⁵³⁷ Par exemple DKB n°1 et 2, 1915, pp. 13-27, pp. 211-227; n° 5, pp. 105-123 ; n°16, pp. ; DKB, 1916"pp. 5ss ; KDZ, n 2, 1915, pp. 19-21.

⁵³⁸ DKB, n° 23, 1914, p. 845; Kamerun Post, n° 72, 1914, p.

⁵³⁹ Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Kamerun, btr. Verbot der Geldausfuhr den 7. August 1914» in, DKB, n° 18, 1914, p. 820; Ant. F. d.s. K, n° 36, 1914, p.377.

⁵⁴⁰ DKB, 1914, p.845.

d'amende ou de moitié avec emprisonnement de six semaines (art.3)⁵⁴¹.

De telles mesures sont sans le moindre lendemain. A la vérité, les opérations militaires finissent par triompher avec pour objectif une cible, le Sud-Cameroun, beaucoup plus rapproché de la cote et réceptacle des voies de communications essentielles⁵⁴². Tous les acteurs de cette guerre qui se déroule au Cameroun ne veulent-ils pas, comme partout dans le monde, « détendre les intérêts de sécurité, de prestige et de puissance ... », comme le suggère R. Poidevin?⁵⁴³ Sinon une simple affaire de pouvoir reste au cœur de l'enjeu.

La qualité des témoignages directs mérite aussi une explication. Alors que le déroulement de la guerre au Cameroun ne semble pas préoccuper la presse française que dans une moindre mesure, l'on observe tout à fait le contraire outre Rhin. L'incertitude liée à l'issue de la guerre, les buts de guerre imprécis, etc., pourraient sans doute expliquer cette négligence cote français. Le général de division J. Aymerich, l'un des acteurs principaux, s'en expliquera autrement à l'avant-propos de son ouvrage paru plus tard en 1933: « Les opérations militaires contre le Cameroun n'ont pas présenté, aux yeux du public, la même importance que celles du front métropolitain. En effet, lorsque les millions de soldats versaient leur sang pour détendre le sol national, qui pouvait songer à la poignée de grades coloniaux et de tirailleurs indigènes, dont le sacrifice obscur s'accomplissait au cœur de l'Afrique, à plus de 5000 Kilomètres de la métropole ?

De temps en temps, un bulletin sommaire faisait connaître la prise de Nola, l'occupation de Moloundou, ou de toute autre localité inconnue, puis c'était le silence, l'oubli, jusqu'à l'arrivée d'un nouveau bulletin de victoire ... »⁵⁴⁴.

En revanche, les contemporains allemands en font une chronique

⁵⁴¹Ibid.

⁵⁴² Sur la perception française de la guerre CF. J. Aymerich, *La conquête du Cameroun I*° aout 1914-20 février 1916.

Payot, Paris, 1933. J. Ferrandi, *Conquête du Cameroun-Nord (1914-1915)*, Charles-Lavauzelle et Clé, Editeurs militaires, Paris, 1928.

⁵⁴³Les origines de la Première Guerre mondiale, PUP, Paris, 1975, p.109.

⁵⁴⁴ La conquête du Cameroun. En préface de l'ouvrage.

inestimable, systématiquement publiée par la presse coloniale, comme l'attestent entre autres la *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, le *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* à travers de longues listes et de nombreuses statistiques.

Quête du pouvoir pour les uns, Anglais et Français ; conservation du pouvoir pour les autres, Allemands, semblent caractériser les attitudes des Belligérants et matérialiser la violence des opérations militaires le long des voies de communication au Cameroun. Un enjeu qui reste ainsi géostratégique.

I. « Qui occupe le Cameroun, domine l'Afrique Centrale »

Reprise plus tard par Oberst Buffet⁵⁴⁵, en 1920, la formule « qui occupe le Cameroun, domine l'Afrique Centrale », peut être interprétée comme une manifestation du pouvoir et expliquerait également la ténacité du corps expéditionnaires franco-anglais, déterminé à harceler l'ennemi jusqu'au bout. La guerre de 1914, entourés de considérations politiques, le prestige, la sécurité et la puissance, a bénéficié du support des pistes, des routes et du chemin de fer du Centre (*mittellandbahn*) qu'ont empruntés par les forces en présence.

A- Les forces en présence sur le front

Appuyés par le corps expéditionnaire, les alliés, s'embourbent dès le début de la mobilisation dans un terrain inconnu alors qu'on observe pourtant un déséquilibre des forces en leur faveur au fur et à mesure des opérations militaires. D'après les statistiques, les troupes alliées, évaluées jusqu'à 20000 hommes et regroupant Sierra-Léonais, Ghanéens, Gambiens et Nigériens⁵⁴⁶, semblent plus importantes par rapport aux effectifs allemands. Totalisant encore 1735 hommes en 1913 dont 145 Européens et 1550 soldats noirs⁵⁴⁷, la *Schutztruppe* ou l'armée coloniale passent bientôt à 3450 hommes en 1914, soit

⁵⁴⁵DKZ, 1920, p.127.

⁵⁴⁶Bayart, Le Cameroun Tome 1, 1989, p.109.

⁵⁴⁷Striimpell, "Die militärische Besetzung Neukameruns und ihre Rückwirkung auf die militärische Lage im Schutzgebiet Kamerun" in, Jahrbuch über die Deutschen Kolonien, Jahrgang VI, G.D. Baedeker Verlag, Essen, 1913, pp. 46-50.

respectivement 3200 soldats et 250 officiers allemands; et si l'on tient compte des recrues en Afrique orientale allemande qui ont gagné le Cameroun par vole maritime, on atteint environ 4000 et 4200 hommes.⁵⁴⁸ L'organisation de la *Scnutruppe* a également évolué assez rapidement au lendemain du XXe siècle passant de 6 en 1900 a9 en 1902 avec la conquête du Nord-Cameroun et 11 compagnies en 1911 au moment de l'acquisition du *Neu Kamerun* suite à la deuxième crise marocaine⁵⁴⁹•

L'utilisation des cyclistes et motocyclistes dans certaines régions, mais également l'emploi des coureurs sur les pistes atteste la volonté française de maintenir la pression sur l'ennemi. Quel contraste au regard de la guerre motorisée en Europe!

Seconde puissance sidérurgique mondiale, grand producteur d'acier avec en 1913, près de 19 millions de tonnes sur un total mondial de 77 millions de tonnes⁵⁵⁰, 5% de la production mondiale, l'Allemagne entendait cependant livrer la guerre contre les alliés au Cameroun sans aucun complexe. L'industrie chimique permettait également à l'Allemagne de fabriquer des explosifs qui devaient servir pendant la guerre dans la destruction des ponts et des voies de communication.

De part et d'autre, les troupes étaient armées de mitrailleuses, de pièces d'artillerie et obus.⁵⁵¹

B- Les choix majeurs de Camerounais

La guerre mondiale impose des choix à tous. A la différence des contemporains, Allemands, Français ou Anglais, pour des raisons patriotiques et chauvinistes, les Camerounais par contre étaient places devant un dilemme cornélien: le choix. Les témoignages permettent de décrire les comportements des populations avec un accent sur les motivations qui sont à l'origine de tels choix. Cette façon de voir

⁵⁴⁸ J. Aymerich, *La coquette du Cameroun*, p; 15.

⁵⁴⁹ O. Zimmermann, *Dle Schutziruppe und Neu Kamerun in, Jahrbuch uber dle Deustchen Kolonlen*, Jahrgang VI, G.D. Baedeker Verlag, Essen, 1912, pp. 42-49.

⁵⁵⁰ J. Barlety, "Le Traite de Versailles et l'ambition d'industrialiser la France" in, *Revue d'Allemagne*, t. 30, no 1 Janvier -Mars 1998, p.43 note 6 [art.pp 41-52]

⁵⁵¹ J. Aymerich, *La conquête du Cameroun*" pp. 54-69.

permet de discuter par exemple de l'engagement réfléchi des Camerounais, acteurs de l'histoire au cours de cette période tumultueuse. Étaient-ils germanophiles, francophiles ou anglophobes ou bien vice-versa, germanophobes, francophobes ou anglophobes? Il sera certes facile de les ranger dans l'un ou l'autre camp en suivant ainsi les traces d'un observateur anglais de l'époque. Selon *African Daily* du 20 novembre 1914, on fait apparaître des catégories régionales pour caractériser les options individuelles et décrire les mentalités collectives des Camerounais de façon suivante :

«Les populations douala sont germanophobes, certainement parce que nous sommes déjà là. Celles de l'intérieur sont volontiers germanophiles et haïssent les douala. Les soldats sont recrutés à l'intérieur du territoire. Nous (Anglais) occupons actuellement Douala et la partie nord du Cameroun. Les Français ont occupés la partie sud. C'est ainsi que sont réparties les forces».⁵⁵² Ce point de vue anglais est une caricature qui masque plusieurs autres réalités historiques intimement liées à la conjoncture coloniale.

S'il faut d'abord s'interroger sur la nature des relations entre Allemands et Douala, les rétrospectives historiques soulignent qu'elles ont traversé une véritable crise dès la signature du traité de 1884 qui a pris de court les concurrents anglais à travers l'action tardive du consul l'anglais Hewett, surnommé « the too late consul ». Tumultueuses, ces relations ont été empoisonnées successivement par une série d'événements en défaveur des Douala: perte du monopole commercial à l'intérieur et sur les berges du Wouri en 1898, expropriation de leurs terres et refus des héritiers légaux d'exécuter la procédure en la matière.⁵⁵³ L'affaire dure de 1906 à 1914 et même au-delà.

La germanophobie des Douala pendant la première guerre mondiale peut donc être interprétée comme une réaction défensive en vue de sauvegarder leurs traditions terriennes, leurs intérêts, l'espace ancestral, symbolisé par la figure du roi. En revanche, avec la pendaison du roi Douala Manga Bell, la tension atteint son paroxysme ;

⁵⁵² Cité par DKB n° 1 et 2, janvier 1915, pp.23-24 (Traduction, Ph-BL Essomba)

⁵⁵³ Sur ces questions cf. Austen Ralph and J. Derrick, *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers*, p. 112 ss.

la « chronique des événements »⁵⁵⁴ de la vie commune à tous les villages douala disparaît ainsi.

Le rôle joué par les Douala est connu. À l'instar des commerçants anglais, ils vont remplir les fonctions de guide aux côtes des alliés. Si le commerçant Hill, hissé avec fierté sur un cheval, pouvait conduire les troupes en leur indiquant le chemin, les éclaireurs douala utilisaient le tam-tam, à pied ou en transportant les Anglais dans leurs pirogues, sur la crique de Douala et dans les régions environnantes.⁵⁵⁵ Arrêté le 28 septembre 1914 de retour de sa tournée pastorale par des gens de Bell après avoir été sauvé in extremis par les chrétiens de Sodiko, le missionnaire Josef Farber, qualifié par un sous-lieutenant noir de l'armée anglaise de «man for good palaver», «homme des affaires de Dieu» et non «man for fight»⁵⁵⁶, homme pour la bataille, était conscient de la précarité de sa liberté il sait bien le dire:

... Les Allemands étaient recherchés partout et plusieurs trahis par des gens de Bonaberi. Je savais que je serais trahi par les gens de Bonaberi qui m'avaient aperçu en route vers Bonasama et qu'ils allaient annoncer ma présence aux Anglais. J'ai appris aussi que l'un de mes porteurs parti de Bona Ndumbe à Bonasama, avait aussi directement été livré aux Anglais. Il ne faisait plus de doute qu'ils étaient informés de mon arrivée ...⁵⁵⁷

En cette période de guerre, le pouvoir spirituel serait-il remis en question par les populations duala, en particulier toutes les manifestations de cette puissance à travers les missionnaires allemands? Ou tout simplement une volonté de la part des Douala d'affirmer leur identité bafouée? Traqué par les soldats Anglais et arrêté par les germanophobes après une chasse à l'homme qui a duré deux jours, le

⁵⁵⁴ Expression relative à la chefferie bamiléké de D. Malaquais, *Architecture, pouvoir et dissidence au Cameroun*, Karthala, Paris, 2002, p.78.

⁵⁵⁵Recit de Josef Farber (Pallotin): «Gefangennahme eines Pallotiner-Patres in Kamerun » in, DKB, 1915, p. 284; DKB, no 1 et 2,1915, pp. 25-27

⁵⁵⁶ Cite par Josef Farber dans son récit légendaire, DKB, 1915, pp. 25-27.

⁵⁵⁷DKB, 1915. p. 278.

prêtre Josef Farber insiste sur les positions tranchées des « gens de Bonandale, proches parents des Douala », déterminés à le congédier sans ménagement: « Nous ne voulons pas le Dieu des Blancs; nous avons nos propres Dieux; tu es un Allemand et tu dois mourir comme tes autres frères ... »⁵⁵⁸.

L'affirmation du pouvoir spirituel traditionnel pose ainsi l'irréductible question de la frontière religieuse et les pratiques en cours à l'époque coloniale, à l'instar du *Ngondo*, riche en cérémonies rituelles et cosmologiques⁵⁵⁹. Austen Ralph et Jonathan Derrick le désignent comme « From tradition as politics to politics as traditions: the Ngondo »⁵⁶⁰, une assemblée générale du peuple liée au culte spirituel de l'eau, le Jengu.

À l'intérieur, on reste également critique: une analyse minutieuse fait apparaître des divergences dans les comportements des populations, ce qui remet en question le stéréotype classique de germanophobie appliqué à leur égard. Déjà en 1915, Puttkamer exprimait encore la fidèle crainte d'un réveil de la haine des Bamum et des Yaoundé à l'instar des Douala⁵⁶¹, ce qui confirme des points de vue partagés,

D'abord, une bonne frange des populations du Hinterland, favorables aux Allemands, leur a réservé un soutien sans faille au moment où les alliés gagnaient du terrain et déterminaient les nouvelles frontières alliées. Eléments de la *Schutztruppe*, surs et courageux, intrépides, ils auraient prouvé au corps expéditionnaire franco-anglais la solidité de leur formation. Qui sont-ils? En dehors des soldats intègres, Boulou, Yaoundé et Bamoum, d'«autres volontaires» désireux de faire partie de la *Schutztruppe*, auraient souhaité se faire «embaucher». Si l'attitude de ces populations semble avoir été irréprochable, des

⁵⁵⁸ Cite dans DKB, 1915, p. 276 (traduction: Ph-BL Essomba). Voici le texte allemand: « Wir wollen keinen gott von bekala (weiben), wir haben unsere eigenen getter, du bist ein german (Deutscher) und mußtsterben wie die , anderen ».

⁵⁵⁹CP. A. Austen Ralph and Derrick, *Middlemen of the Cameroons Rivers*, pp. 41-184-190.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 184.

⁵⁶¹ DKB, n° 2 février 1915, p. 19.

contemporains allemands apportent des nuances: « Des troubles se sont cependant produits à Ebolowa au début de la guerre et ont entraîné l'exécution du chef (Hauptling) Zampa ... »⁵⁶². Il s'agit de Martin Paul Samba, ancien caporal, *Feldweber*, de la *Schutztruppe*, devenu plutôt par la suite un homme d'affaires influent et riche après sa démission de l'armée en 1899⁵⁶³. Des chefs de villages d'Ambam, soupçonnés d'être en liaison avec les Français étaient également exécutés. De la même façon, quelques remous sont constatés sur la frontière Sud Cameroun à Bouar « sans qu'on puisse parler de rébellion »⁵⁶⁴.

L'hostilité des uns ne doit cependant pas masquer les faveurs d'une tranche de la population.

A. Ambam, la situation se présente autrement: les Allemands auraient également manipulé les chefs de la localité en vue d'espionner les positions françaises la frontière du, Gabon, en empruntant de nombreux raccourcis de la forêt. Mais à cause de nombreuses 'indiscrétions, l'affaire aurait été étalée au grand jour. Les Français, soucieux d'exploiter en retour la filière, auraient remis d'importantes réserves de munitions au chef Ango en vue de les convoier à travers les sentiers. L'affaire devenait désormais un imbroglio connu des Allemands et devait se terminer dans le sang avec l'exécution d'une dizaine de chefs, à l'exemple des chefs Ango et Nkoulou⁵⁶⁵.

Mais les Ntoumou d'Ambam, installés de part et d'autres de la frontière franco-allemande, ont servi de guides aux soldats français ce qui aurait empêché un coup de force de l'ennemi et barre la voie aux contre-attaques de la *Schutztruppe*. Un soutien des populations camerounaises a donc sans doute aidé les Français. La tradition orale excelle par une amplification des faits: « les Ntoumou auraient

⁵⁶² DKZ, n° 1 et 2, janvier 1915, p.25.

⁵⁶³ Sur ces questions cf. N. Ango Aba'a entretien du 31 12 1997 à Nkoulou-Ekeke cite par M. Alo'o Menye, ibid., pp. 29-38.

⁵⁶⁴ DKZ, n° 1 et 2, 1915, p.27.

⁵⁶⁵ Entretien avec N. Ango Aba'a du 31 12 1997 à Nkoulou-Ekeke, cite par M. Alo'o Menye, ibid., pp. 29-38. L'épisode aurait abouti à la pendaison de 7 chefs, en août 1914.

échafaupe » des pièges traditionnels »⁵⁶⁶ le long des pistes en vue de capturer les Allemands sans grand succès. Les combats n'avaient négligé aucun détail de la cote à l'intérieur du territoire.

II- De la thalassocratie à l'hégémonie terrestre

Dans le déroulement des opérations militaires, on passe de la maîtrise de la mer ou combat terrestre. Ayant pris la mesure de l'adversaire sur un terrain inconnu, les troupes franco-britanniques harcèlent les forces allemandes au-delà de Yaoundé désormais devenu le siège des institutions coloniales.

A cause des difficultés en matière de transport, la tâche n'a pas du tout été aisée au départ pour les Français, désireux pourtant de « ravitailler des troupes opérant à des milliers de kilomètres »⁵⁶⁷. Même si l'on doit reconnaître la portée des succès allemands et les revers subis au départ par le corps expéditionnaire, l'alliance franco-britannique finit sans équivoque de triompher de l'Allemagne dès les premiers mois de l'année 1915.

A- La défaite allemande vue par Von Puttkamer

En plus des points de vues exprimés par quelques Camerounais, la presse relate une série de témoignages des acteurs du drame, soldats et officiers de la *Schutztruppe*, administrateurs, missionnaires et commerçants, qui informent sur le déroulement des opérations militaires le long des itinéraires. La défaite allemande était envisagée. Même la thèse récente de Franklin Eylon (1997) privilégie uniquement les sources françaises ce qui confirme que les sources allemandes sont encore peu exploitées.

Un article paru dans la *Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung* du 20 février

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 48 ; 250 Camerounais, ressortissants Ntoundou d' Ambam, seraient morts au cours de la guerre, p. 53.

⁵⁶⁷ F. Eylon, « Origines et circonstances immédiates du partage du Cameroun entre la France et l'Angleterre pendant la Première Guerre mondiale », Thèse en vue du PhD en histoire, Université de Montréal, 1997, p. 251.

1915⁵⁶⁸, révélateur d'un certain état d'esprit et du sursaut patriotique de l'opinion publique allemande, à la signature de Von Puttkamer, ancien gouverneur du Cameroun. Un plaidoyer pour prévenir la débâcle sur terre et anticiper ainsi sur les événements ultérieurs? L'un des artisans d'une administration tracassière, l'ancien gouverneur Jesko von Puttkamer, demis de ses fonctions coloniales en 1907, reconnaît les difficultés auxquelles étaient confrontée la *Schutztruppe*, il exprime de réelles craintes de voir les troupes allemandes s'enliser irrémédiablement dans cette guerre fautive de moyens suffisants. En témoignent, les difficultés de ravitaillement à long terme en vivres, en munitions et en numéraire. Son tableau, en matière hygiénique, est tout aussi pessimiste: la dysenterie et le paludisme, bête noire des Européens, la raréfaction des médicaments et des fortifiants seraient à craindre pour les Allemands. Comment s'en sortir, dans ces conditions, sans une aide rapide et suffisante provenant d'Allemagne? Il dit: « Il y'aura un besoin d'argent car il faudrait rémunérer les soldats, les porteurs et les travailleurs. «Man: wird sich mit guscheinen helfen, aber wle lange »⁵⁶⁹. Sa conclusion, pessimiste, est orientée vers l'avenir: "l'avenir dira bien et jugera qui a fait preuve de beaucoup de sacrifices entre les colonies de nos ennemis et les nôtres ... »

B- De la thalassocratie ou la maîtrise de la frontière maritime

La volonté alliée de venir à bout de la *Schutztruppe* s'est d'abord traduite à partir de la cote par la maîtrise de la mer. A diverses reprises, les armées franco-anglaises frappent devant la porte de Douala et de Kribi, carrefours et frontières des voies de communication maritimes et terrestres.

En septembre 1914 commencent les attaques répétées à partir du port d'estuaire contre la ville de Douala⁵⁷⁰. A partir de leur bateau de guerre, Le Hergozin Elisabeth, les Anglais bombardent la cite du 9 au 26 septembre. Les Allemands doivent reculer au terme de ces violents combats.

⁵⁶⁸DKB, W 2, pp.19-20.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ibid.

La stratégie allée s'impose quelques mois plus tard à Kribi à cause de sa situation maritime. Les Allemands, conscients tout au début de la colonisation du fait que Kribi était exposé aux assauts ennemis en cas de guerre, auraient donc négligé son développement. Si les troupes françaises ont réussi à occuper Grand Satanga, Londji et Plantation, elles sont par contre vaincues à Kribi le 6 décembre par le commandant von Hagen.⁵⁷¹ Le renfort allié par les troupes anglaises doit ensuite conforter les positions françaises. En prenant appui sur les bateaux de guerre, le corps expéditionnaire franco-anglais s'impose aux termes de durs combats. Après les premiers bombardements des ports de Kribi et de Campo en Octobre 1914, Kribi est de nouveau bombardé le 20 juin 1915 et perd le bureau des domaines⁵⁷². La maîtrise de la mer vise donc, un objectif: l'hégémonie vers l'intérieur à travers les voies de communication.

Avec la reprise de Douala sur la cote par le corps expéditionnaire franco-anglais le 28 septembre 1914⁵⁷³, les troupes allemandes se sont-elles répétées en ordre à l'intérieur du territoire pour organiser une meilleure défensive en vue du succès ? Puttkamer l'affirme⁵⁷⁴. Qu'en penser? La thèse selon laquelle les années allemandes se sont repliées en ordre sans être battues, une conception classique dans l'historiographie d'outre-Rhin, aurait été, très tôt, développée au Cameroun. En dehors de cette objection pertinente, la véracité historique atteste la traversée du désert par les troupes allemandes, ce que rapportent les chroniqueurs de la guerre des avant 1915. A l'analyse, les alliés ont réussi à débarquer leurs troupes sous la protection des canons, loin dans la frontière Sud de Douala, à la rive droite de la Dibamba, malgré une résistance acharnée de la *Schutztruppe*.⁵⁷⁵ Par ce débarquement, il s'agirait de provoquer ainsi la

⁵⁷² DKB, n° 24, décembre 1915, p. 410; aussi J. Aymerich, La conquête du Cameroun, p. 36 moins explicite que les chroniques allemandes.

⁵⁷³ Récits du Dr. Ph. G. Bohringer qui raconte sa captivité à Douala et Dahomey CF. DKZ, 1915, pp. 20-21.

⁵⁷⁴ DKB, 1915, p. 19.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 23.

retraite des troupes allemandes vers Japoma via le pont sur la Dibamba.

Des novembre 1914, on célébrait déjà la victoire du corps expéditionnaire, Un témoin anonyme, ressortissant anglais dit: « Nous autres Anglais, devons rendre hommage à notre étoile que la guerre puisse commencer à un moment où nous étions le mieux préparés et ou l'entente cordiale est à son beau fixe »⁵⁷⁶. Un hymne à la victoire des alliés avant 1915?

A la vérité, de nombreux témoignages, non officiels, provenant des civils allemands, relatent l'importance de la thalassocratie, la façon dont les Anglais ont envahi Douala en septembre 1914⁵⁷⁷. Les Allemands doivent s'incliner: quelques 300 personnes, à court de munitions, armées seulement de 80 fusils de la *Schutztruppe*, doivent se rassembler à Douala; l'hôpital du gouvernement, située à Deido accueille une partie des Allemands tandis que les femmes et les enfants occupent l'église catholique. Les alliés marquent les points décisifs des après le 27 septembre: tous les Allemands de Douala, hommes, femmes, enfants sont internes dans le bateau anglais comme prisonniers de guerre. Les missionnaires Pallotins faits prisonniers par les Anglais à Einsledeln le 30 novembre étaient évacués à Victoria à travers le Decauville serpentant les plantations et là, ils retrouvaient leurs confrères déjà internes⁵⁷⁸.

Au cours de cette période, on parvient à établir un bilan du matériel militaire. Le corps expéditionnaire, 15000 soldats environ, était doté d'un important équipement militaire, 30 blindes, 4 croiseurs anglais et 1 bateau à canons, 2 croiseurs français, le «Bruix» et le « Surprise» basé à Manoka.⁵⁷⁹ Les Allemands ont regretté l'arrivée tardive du commandant von Engelbrechten après la prise de Douala⁵⁸⁰, ce qui confirme le succès des alliés à partir de la frontière maritime.

⁵⁷⁶African Mail du 20. XI 1914, cite par KOB, n° 1 et 2, 1915, p.23.

⁵⁷⁷ DKB, n° 1 et 2, 1/15 janvier 1915, pp. 21-27.

⁵⁷⁸ P. Lettenbauer, cite par H. Skolaster Dle Pallotiner in Kamerun, pp. 270-271.

⁵⁷⁹ DKB, pp. 23; aussi J. Aymerich, La conquête du Cameroun, p.37.

⁵⁸⁰ DKB, n° 6, p. 109.

B- L'hégémonie sur les voies terrestres

Si l'hégémonie maritime est défavorable aux Allemands le long des chemins de fer et des routes de latérite, le corps expéditionnaire marque également des points sur le front. Des octobre-novembre commencent alors la guerre en vue de maîtriser les voies de communication, lieu de passage des troupes⁵⁸¹. Pour déloger l'armée coloniale allemande, les troupes alliées vont opérer dans trois principales directions: en amont de la frontière Wouri autour de Yabassi d'abord, dans la région de la *Nordbahn* ensuite, et enfin en direction de la *Mittel/andbahn*.

a- Yabassi

Le 8 octobre, les forces anglaises vont à l'assaut et attaquent la 1^{ère} Compagnie allemande retranchée à Yabassi sous le commandement de Hadicke, seconde par le sous-lieutenant a. D. Pflanze Herbst. La *Schutztruppe*, armée à peine de 300 fusils, réussit pourtant à s'imposer face à une armée anglaise imposante, 6 compagnies et un bataillon de *West African Frontier Force*.⁵⁸² Le désastre aurait coûté la vie à 10 Européens et 200 soldats noirs cote anglais, alors que les pertes allemandes seraient moins nombreuses: 5 soldats noirs tués et 4 blessés. La véracité de ces informations est-elle attestée?

Les explications n'ont pas manqué. Dans une lettre du 14 octobre, un officier anglais attribue la cause de cette infortune à l'imprudence d'avoir fait combattre les soldats pendant 48 heures à jeun.⁵⁸³ Par contre, l'officier anglais reconnaît uniquement la perte de quelques officiers: 1 officier et 2 sous-officiers tués et un blessé sur 16 Européens.⁵⁸⁴

Au-delà de cette guerre des communiqués destinés à atteindre le moral de l'adversaire, l'intervention du commandement supérieur aurait été la bienvenue: « le 10 octobre, le General (Dobell?) arrive à

⁵⁸¹Ibid.

⁵⁸²Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Lettre du Times citée par Le DKB, p.109.

⁵⁸⁴Ibid.

son tour et ordonne à tout le monde de se retirer de Douala »⁵⁸⁵. A la mi-octobre, c'est la réplique anglaise. La deuxième expédition se solde par la prise de Njamtam, le siège d'une station de la mission baptiste. Cote allemand, l'on fait savoir que l'intervention anglaise a eu lieu à Yabassi « après le retrait de notre section »⁵⁸⁶. Une réplique de la guerre des communiqués en attendant la poursuite des combats?

b- La défense de la *Nordbahn* et de la *Mittellandbahn* : la bataille de Sufa

Les combats pour le contrôle de la Nordbahn, étalés sur environ deux mois et demi, de fin septembre à novembre, ont lieu à Sufa, dans la région de Mujaka, au Km 60 de la ligne du Nord, zone stratégique servant de base et de point d'appui à la *Schutztruppe*.⁵⁸⁷ Confiée au commandant von Engelbrechten, la section, forte de 150 soldats, comprenait entre autres des lieutenants: Abramowski, d. R. Gropke, Losch, Pfitzenmaner et le médecin Stechele; des sous-officiers: les sous-lieutenants d. R. Warnicke et Schwab et deux chercheurs. Pour renforcer les effectifs, on y adjoint 50 soldats noirs partis du district d'ossidingue sous le commandement du lieutenant d. R. Klimowitz mais aussi des civils allemands (12), habitant la région et en grande partie des planteurs. Les forces alliées, deux fois supérieures aux forces allemandes, totaliseraient de 500 à 1000 hommes⁵⁸⁸.

C'est von Engelbrechten qui choisit le lieu-dit Sufa, au Km 25/30, en vue d'assurer la défense de la Nordbahn. Quelle stratégie appliquée? Empêcher tout d'abord l'adversaire redoutable de prendre la *Schutztruppe* à revers et garantir par là une grande manœuvre en cas de retraite, sécuriser le chemin de fer mais aussi le fleuve Mounjo, d'importance vitale, en drainant une grande quantité d'eau entre Sufa et le pont sur le Bomono et concentrant plusieurs voies de communication dans cette région bien peuplée,

Cette stratégie ne réussit pas. Pourquoi? D'après les témoignages

⁵⁸⁵ Lettre du 14 octobre 1914 par dans le Times, citée par DKB, 1915, p109.

⁵⁸⁶DKB, 1915.

⁵⁸⁷Ibid. pp. 109-110.

⁵⁸⁸Ibid

allemands, ces plans défensifs auraient aggravé des difficultés à cause, notamment des « relations haineuses » entre les Douala et leurs proches parents habitant la région à défendre située le long de la Nordbahn, Bomono-Maka-Sufa-Mbanga. Maniant avec dextérité le tam-tam, les populations auraient alors par anticipation prévenu les Anglais, déjouant ainsi l'effet de surprise de la *Schutztruppe*.

Les premiers combats ne sont pas pour autant en faveur des Anglais. Le 1er octobre, l'attaque anglaise se solde par la mort d'un Européen dans son camp près de Maka et la patrouille allemande pouvait continuer à tirer sur l'adversaire à Sufa faisant 15 à 22 victimes (15 à 20 soldats et 2 Européens) côté anglais et blessant le lieutenant allemand Losch.⁵⁸⁹ La bataille du 19 octobre semble également avoir été à l'avantage de la *Schutztruppe* si l'on en croit la presse coloniale allemande:

« ... 8 européenne tués dans le camp anglais et enterres par nos soins, 4 autres européens blessés et 50 soldats noirs tués ou blessés » et, si « aucun blanc » ne tombe côté allemand, on dénombre cependant Le décès de « 4 soldats noirs, 3 blessés et 8 disparus »⁵⁹⁰. En outre, la *Schutztruppe* aurait obtenu un butin de guerre, deux mitrailleuses, quelques fusils, 1200 cartouches et des cartes en matière stratégique.

À diverses reprises, les troupes du général Dobell se présentent à Sufa. Le renfort des troupes anglaises en hommes et en armements des Novembre doit remettre les pendules à l'heure et changer complètement cette phase de la guerre. Aussi, les troupes anglaises occupent Nkongsamba, terminus de la *Nordbahn*, le 9 décembre et Baré, station gouvernementale située à 10 kilomètres, le 10 du même mois.

Refoules à 120 Km vers Lum-Lala, les Allemands perdaient leurs symboles de domination économiques, 5 locomotives, plusieurs wagons et deux véhicules passent ainsi aux mains, des Anglais comme butin de guerre. Toute cette partie du Cameroun était libérée avant l'année 1915. La presse allemande sait conclure: « La guerre avait duré

⁵⁸⁹Ibid. p. 110.

⁵⁹⁰Ibid

deux mois et demi le long du chemin de fer du Nord ... »⁵⁹¹.

Mais en 1915, d'avril à juillet, la course à la victoire se poursuit le long de la Mittellandbahn avec la même vigueur. Sous le titre « la région côtière »⁵⁹², en guerre, le *DKS* souligne la portée d'une hégémonie discutée à l'est d'Edéa. Des avrils, les troupes anglaises et françaises gagnent de haute lutte le passage entre Kele-Ngwe et se retranchent à la rive et de la rivière Ngwe ; un autre confluent de la Kele, Ndupe, tombe sous l'emprise alliée.⁵⁹³ La durée, 16 jours au total, explique l'intensité des combats qui obligent les troupes du major Hadicke à évacuer les lieux. En plus de Wumbiaga, ces conquêtes sont effectuées par une armée anglaise toujours audacieuse. Les soldats anglais avalent-ils été drogues par suite d'une consommation importante d'alcool pour se donner courage? Le rapport dresse par les Allemands sur ces événements l'affirme sans détour. Il reste que les effectifs militaires anglais, souteneurs à la *Schutztruppe*, ont marqué des points en frappant mortellement le vice caporal R. Benkirch.

L'hégémonie sur le *Mittellandbahn*, entre la Sanaga et le Nyong, retient également l'attention des stratégies alors que Français et Anglais atteignent la région de Makondo, à 6 Km environ au sud d'Eseka à partir de mai-juin. Si les troupes françaises sont les premières à contraindre la garnison allemande chargée des voies de communication à se retirer à l'est, il reste que désormais succès et échec vont s'alterner de part et d'autre.⁵⁹⁴ Dès le 11 mai, une forte poussée des troupes françaises finit par forcer le siège d'Eseka, terminus provisoire du chemin de fer du centre, contraignant ainsi le commandant a. D. Schlosser, de replier, semble-t-il, jusqu'aux environs des hauts plateaux à 188 Km.

Une question préoccupante: la route vers Yaoundé était-elle déjà ouverte? Car, adverses reprises, les troupes alliées frappent à la porte d'Eseka. Conscients de la gravité de la situation, les Allemands doivent tenter un ultime sursaut. Pour faire place aux ambitions du corps

⁵⁹¹Ibid., p.11

⁵⁹²DKB, n° 24, 1915, pp. 408-412: Das Kustengebiet.

⁵⁹³Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴Ibid. 1915, p. 410 ; DKB, n°

expéditionnaire, ne conviendrait-il pas de bloquer la mise en route des Français vers le Nord en reprenant le contrôle du chemin de fer? Les stratégies allemands penchent vers cette solution: la jonction des forces du commandant Schlosser et du major Hadicke, entre Eseka et Bidjocka, serait sans doute la matérialisation de la rencontre, quelques jours auparavant, entre le commandant Schlosser et le caporal Mellentin dont l'initiative d'attaquer von Tima Lom, le 13 mai, sur le Nyong dans les environs de So Dibanga, une station du chemin de fer, a été sans le moindre lendemain⁵⁹⁵. La manœuvre aboutit-elle?

D'après Aymerich «l'ennemi n'a opposé partout que des résistances d'avant-garde, facilitées par la nature du pays, sa ligne de retraite suit la direction d'Eseka et de Yaoundé, au s'est transporté le siège du gouvernement »⁵⁹⁶. Défaits, sans renoncer au combat, les Allemands parviennent à menacer les flancs adverses ainsi que leurs positions arrière : opération militaire se soldant même par la reprise d'Eseka. Presqu'au même moment l'irruption des troupes anglaises, commandés par Adametz, sur le flanc gauche de la Sanaga se solde au mois de juin par la saisie de 500 voitures environ parmi lesquelles 300 voitures de ravitaillement⁵⁹⁷. Faute de ravitaillement la perte de la guerre était donc inéluctable pour les Allemands. Au cours des combats qui ont eu lieu du 13 au 18 juin, le major Hadicke parvient à repousser les troupes franco-anglaises jusqu'à Kele Ngwe s'imposant de la même faille, la tendance se renverse. Le corps expéditionnaires a désormais le vent en poupe. Fin octobre, il a la mainmise sur Wumbiaga, station du chemin de fer entre Bidjocka et Eseka sur la route Edea-Yaounde⁵⁹⁸.

D- Sur les routes de la latérite

Mis à part l'itinéraire des chemins de fer, le reste du territoire subit l'action de la route et des chemins de la forêt, siège des assauts répétés des armées en conflit.

⁵⁹⁵La conque du Cameroun, p.36.

⁵⁹⁶Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibi d, « rapporte les informations de la presse française et anglaise »

⁵⁹⁸DKB, n0 10 et 11 juin 1915, p.229.

A partir de Kribi, le renfort des troupes anglaises à conforments les positions et a conduit à de nouvelles attaques sur les routes en direction de Lolodorf et de Nkomakak⁵⁹⁹.

Déjà, le siège de Kribi de décembre 1914 à juin 1915 fait tache d'huile et limite la liberté de manœuvre allemande. Des contemporains, Allemands et ressortissants d'Etats neutres, décrivent à grands traits la situation de Kribi qui n'a cessé de se dégrader. Dans l'une de ces lettres pavées, en date du 17 janvier 1915, on peut lire: « les forces d'occupation français à Kribi ne font pas confiance à Kribi... »⁶⁰⁰.

A diverses reprises, fin mai-juillet, les allés s'établissent entre Etima et Dehane sur le Nyong et progressent vers la Lokundje⁶⁰¹.

Plus au Sud, a Campo, ont eu les combats les plus violents en direction de la route d'Ambam et d'Ebolowa. Malgré l'arrivée d'un régiment indien composé de soldats originaires de Singapour, la tâche des allés n'est pas pour autant aisée.⁶⁰² D'abord chassés par la *Schutztruppe*, ils réussissent enfin l'occupation des villages Dipikar, à environ 15 Km au Nord de Campo. La conquête de la route d'Ambam, le 3 aout aboutit également à un échec sur la montagne « Ekok » et l'inspecteur de l'hôpital militaire, Staack aurait perdu pied au cours de ce siège⁶⁰³.

Dans la région frontalière avec le Muni espagnol, les Allemands abandonnent Oyem des avril 1915 et se retirent vers le fleuve Ntem. Bitam est pris et la région fortement assiégée est ravitaillée pendant quelques mots⁶⁰⁴.

A Akoafim, un renfort des troupes françaises, 400 hommes partis du sud du Dja délogent l'adversaire le 20 aout et le contraignent à se retirer vers Sangmélina⁶⁰⁵. Dans le sud-est du Nyong, à Akonolinga, les troupes françaises, attaquées par surprise sont vaincues; Abong-Mbang

⁵⁹⁹ Cite par DKB, juin 1915, p.229.

⁶⁰⁰DKB. n° 24 décembre 1915, p.410.

⁶⁰¹Ibid.

⁶⁰²DKB, n024 décembre 1915, p.411.

⁶⁰³Ibid

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., p.5.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibi., p.6.

et Doume sont repris un moment par l'adversaire avec des victimes au cours des combats qui se déroulent sur la route de Nguelemenduga: un sergent français et 14 tirailleurs sénégalais tués aussi qu'un lieutenant et plusieurs soldats blessés contre 2 blessés graves dans les rangs de la *Schutztruppe*⁶⁰⁶.

Région sensible, carrefour des voies de communication terrestres et fluviales, territoire frontalier avec les colonies voisines, le *Neu Kamerun* exerce un grand attrait, notamment sur la France désireuse, au moins de revenir sur les frontières de 1911, au mieux parvenir à la victoire totale à travers la reconquête du Cameroun. Selon le général Aymerich, les débuts de l'entreprise étaient faciles : « Le 6 août, arrivent simultanément deux bonnes nouvelles: Bonga et Zinga ont été occupés sans coup férir ; les deux tentacules de la pieuvre allemande ont été tranchées, et les communications sont libres entre les divers tronçons de notre domaine colonial⁶⁰⁷ ».

Les témoignages d'Oscar Zimmermann, commandant de la *Schutztruppe* et de Karl Ebermaler, gouverneur allemand en poste, vont intervenir aux côtes du corps expéditionnaire sur le front méridional. En moins de deux mois, de septembre à octobre 1914, le *Neu Kamerun* se trouve aux mains des Français.

D'après le commandant Zimmermann, l'intervention allemande à travers la 9^{ème} compagnie et de la section Marwitz visait alors un objectif: assiéger Ouesso en vue de bloquer la navigation des bateaux dans la Sangha et d'arrêter l'offensive de l'ennemi venant de l'Oubangui⁶⁰⁸. Si les attaques des troupes franco-belges des 11 septembre (Timundi), 26 septembre (Ngali) et 8 octobre (Djembe sur la Sangha) viennent difficilement à bout de la résistance allemande, elles aboutissent enfin le 18 octobre par la défaite des troupes du commandant Eymael: 20 morts, plusieurs blessés, mais des prisonniers parmi lesquels en plus du Dr Koch, les lieutenants Meyer et Knoerze, le caporal Einfeldt, le sergent sanitaire Paschke et une douzaine de

⁶⁰⁶La conquête du Cameroun, Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁰⁷ DKB, 0^o 6, mars 1915, p. 116, aussi J. Aymerich, La conquête, p.61.

⁶⁰⁸ Rap port d'Ebermaler, ibid., aussi J. Aymerich, La conquête ; p. 46.

soldats. D'après Karl Ebermaler⁶⁰⁹, la prise de Nola, le 18 octobre après cinq jours de siège par les Français, s'établit comme suit: 2 officiers, 2 sous-officiers et plusieurs soldats de la *Schutztruppe* faits prisonniers, ce qui confirme peu à peu les bilans de Zimmerman.

Avec la chute d'Ukoko, suivie de la saisie de 800 fusils par les troupes franco-belges, le moral de la *Schutztruppe* est durablement atteint⁶¹⁰. Le renfort de 123 fusils, le redéploiement de la garnison d'Ukoko sauvée par le commandant Eltester, ne suffisent pas amener von Heigelin à la victoire malgré la capture d'un officier français et la saisie d'un magasin d'approvisionnement en territoire français⁶¹¹. On peut naturellement considérer que la prise de Carnot et de Bouar, fin octobre, scelle définitivement la victoire française dans le Neu Kamerun.

A Yaoundé, l'installation du général Aymerich dans les structures de la mission catholique de Mvolye⁶¹² peut être interprétée comme l'expression de l'affirmation du pouvoir spirituel et temporel de l'occupant français, la manifestation de l'alliance du trône et de l'autel.

Une seconde transformation des paysages?

Les destructions opérées au cours de la guerre apparaissent également comme une répétition dans l'histoire de la transformation des paysages. Elles contredisent la portée des transformations économiques et remettent en question l'idée de progrès au profit des populations. Pourtant, la création des paysages ferroviaires et routiers, une histoire connue, a été une œuvre de longue haleine qui a nécessité des sacrifices multiformes des contemporains.

Une fois mis en place, les ouvrages d'art, ponts et rails, les réseaux de communication, lignes télégraphiques et téléphoniques, etc., sont à l'écart de quelques années de nouveau saccades. La responsabilité en incombe aussi bien aux Allemands qu'aux allées de la guerre, Français

⁶⁰⁹ Pay ou, Paris

⁶¹⁰ DKB, 0°6, 1915, p.116.

⁶¹¹ J. Aymerich, La conquête du Cameroun, p. 169.

⁶¹² R. Poidevin, Les origines de la Première Guerre mondiale, p. 108.

et Anglais. C'est la thèse de la responsabilité partagée qui éclaire par ailleurs les origines même de la Première Guerre mondiale: «provocation des uns; laisser-faire des autres»⁶¹³. Il serait intéressant d'en faire le bilan et d'en désigner les coupables.

La série commence des 1914 alors que les Allemands sont pourchassés le long de *Nordbahn*, à Maka, puis vers Bomono. Dynamite en octobre par la *Schutztruppe*⁶¹⁴, le rail est bientôt rétabli par les Anglais mais l'on constate l'ampleur de la destruction des rails. D'après les témoignages allemands, la mise à sac des communications télégraphiques reliant Douala Buea en incomberait aux Douala, bras séculier des allées sur le *Nordbahn*:

Dans la deuxième semaine d'octobre, les Duala se mirent à couper les communications télégraphiques reliant Douala et Buea. Cependant, ils étaient inquiétés la nuit par notre patrouille. Au même moment, sur ordre des, Anglais, les traitres indigènes faisaient sauter derrière nous des tronçons de chemin de fer.

En mars 1915, alors que le corps expéditionnaire franco-anglais, en poste avarice au Sud d'Edéa sur la *Mittellandbahn*, le sous-officier Müller de la compagnie Reder, en patrouille à la rive droite de la Sanaga, doit en faire autant: (II) « détruit le chemin de fer et la ligne télégraphique à 68 Km au nord d'Edéa; il va ensuite livrer combat contre les troupes allées revenant de la Sanaga et en route vers l'avant-poste allemand sur la route Edea-Babimbi⁶¹⁵.

Dans leur retraite vers Yaoundé, les Allemands détendent également les ponts Yapoma et la Dibamba, tout comme les installations télégraphiques et téléphoniques sur la *Mittellandbahn*. Mais le pont sur la Lokundje à Bipindi, vers Kribi, est préservé, Georg Zenker avant refusé d'exécuter la consigne de ses compatriotes.⁶¹⁶ Un

⁶¹³ DKB, 1915, p. 410.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Ph- Laburthe Tolra, Yaoundé d'après Zenker, Annales de la Faculté des Lettres, Université de Yaoundé

⁶¹⁶ DKB, no. 2, février 1915, pp. 20-21.

cas isole tranchant avec le comportement de tous, du camerounais, Allemands, Anglais et de celui des troupes dans les villages.

IV- Entre pillage et commerce sexuel

La stabilité et la pérennité des populations du Cameroun en ces temps de guerre imposent aussi d'autres types de réflexions. Les Douala ne manquent pas d'exploiter ces espérances déçues en se réconciliant les bonnes grâces des Anglais également échaudés en 1884 de n'avoir pas presque signé Le protectorat au Cameroun. La description des Douala par les Allemands, présentes tout à l'instar des Anglais comme nourrissant une haine contre les Allemands et, à l'opposé, friands de leurs biens, revient comme un leitmotiv⁶¹⁷ Rapportant sa captivité du 27 septembre 1914, journée de contraste au cours de laquelle le drapeau blanc flottait à Douala le matin, faisant place le soir au drapeau allée, je Dr. Ph. G. Bohringer confirme ces clichés, met en avant la complicité anglo-douala en mouvement⁶¹⁸. En dehors du meurtre d'un Allemand décapité devant la gare le 28 septembre, (avec une machette), de nombreux cas de viols sont perpétrés par des officiers anglais: destruction des caisses et de coffre-fort dans des domiciles allemands et pillage des différents produits dans les factoreries, cartons de cigarettes et autres produits de nécessité, etc. Des preuves qui accablent les officiers anglais perçus comme des « voleurs », même si le Dr. Ph. Bohringer fait cependant remarquer que lorsqu'on demande des explications sur de tels comportements, les Anglais pour se disculper, répondent tout simplement en pointant du doigt les Douala⁶¹⁹.

Son récit sur la détention des Allemands à l'hôpital gouvernemental de Douala affirme pourtant le contraire et accuse les Anglais

... Nous étions au moins 150 personnes entassées dans de petites chambres. On passa deux jours sans nous donner à manger

⁶¹⁷Ibid

⁶¹⁸Ibid

⁶¹⁹Ibid. p. 21.

... La première nuit, tous les prisonniers furent réveillés et dépouillés de tout leur argent, des sommes de plus de 100 Mark, sans reçu C'était le même précédé le lendemain, l'argent de nos porte-monnaie étant vole par des officiers anglais ...⁶²⁰.

Dans un long récit⁶²¹ sur son arrestation et sa captivité au Cameroun, le missionnaire Pallotin, Josef Farber, attribue les pillages dans les factoreries et les maisons d'habitation appartenant aux Allemands, dès le 28 septembre 1914, peu après la prise de la ville de Douala, aux « gens de Bonendale » qu'ils avaient croisés sur l'itinéraire Bonaberi-Douala. Il soutient également que les Anglais leur en avaient donné la possibilité. Témoin oculaire des événements, les missionnaires ont raconté un récit riche en anecdotes: « un groupe de noirs, des chaises et autres mobiliers sur les épaules ou sur la tête, habillés par la peur et la joie des “ malheurs d'autrui, passait rapidement près de moi avec une attitude provocatrice ... »⁶²².

D'autres témoignages sur les comportements « des Anglais au Cameroun »⁶²³, affirment également leur responsabilité dans la rétention des biens des missions chrétiennes des septembre 1914. A l'exemple des biens appartenant à la mission de Bale: vols d'articles dans les factoreries, de chevaux, et de cultures par les officiers anglais précédant à l'abattage des bœufs qu'ils auraient revendus au prix de 40 ou 120 Mark le gigot⁶²⁴. La mission Pallotine d'Einsiedeln subit les mêmes assauts des novembre, tout comme la station d'Engelbert qui doit perdre son élevage bovin au profit des Anglais⁶²⁵.

Les Anglais ne détiennent pas seuls la palme de tels forfaits le temps de guerre. Les Français ont suivi le même geste. La tradition

⁶²⁰« Kamerun. Gefangennahme eines Pallotiner-Patres » in, DKB, n°10-11, juin, 1915, pp. 276-284.

⁶²¹Ibid. p.278.

⁶²²« Di e Engländer in Kamerun » in, DKZ, n°7, juillet 1915, pp. 99-101.

⁶²³Ibid. p. 99.

⁶²⁴« Englisch Roheiten gegen deutsche Missionare in Kamerun » in, DKZ, n° 3, mars, p. 36.

⁶²⁵Noah Ebenda (centenaire), entretien du 18. VIII. 1999, à Mvolye Yaoundé.

orale ne manque pourtant pas de relever l'illusion entretenue auprès des populations par les troupes françaises le long de la route Yaoundé-Kribi: Après le passage des Allemands à Binguéla, on nous disait seulement allons, allons les Français sont déjà là. Ils ont beaucoup de richesses qu'ils vont nous donner »⁶²⁶. Contemporain des événements, Noah Ebenda montre par contre la vacuité de ces assurances françaises dès le retour dans les villages des populations en fuite: allées et venues des soldats pillant des animaux domestiques, moutons et chèvres, dans des villages, allant même parfois jusqu'aux enlèvements des femmes et occasionnant toutes sortes d'abus et délits sexuels étaient de règle. La sécurité des populations était menacée.

En vue de faire pièce à ces rafles, les habitants ont réagi, ce qui traduit une continuité dans la perception de la forêt, lieu de refuge contre les agressions extérieures: les populations désertent les villages et passent des nuits en forêt en empruntant différentes pistes. L'affaire provoque une vive émotion: les habitants doivent protester auprès du chef de patrouille. Un compromis est bientôt trouvé: il doit ramener les pillards à la raison et éviter de nouveaux débordements: il est décidé d'offrir des femmes aux soldats en vue de satisfaire leurs pulsions sexuelles.

Ces péripéties dévoient ainsi un autre aspect de l'histoire des menteurs: en temps de guerre, le commerce sexuel était entretenu par les troupes allées, ce qui suggère également le difficile problème de la rémunération des soldats. Ces troupes alliées, notamment les soldats français, étaient-elles rémunérées? Situation comparable à celle d'avant 1914? Cette période avait aussi été marquée par un climat de terreur orchestré par les soldats de la *Schutztruppe* et les caravanes commerciales à la recherche de vivres, ravageant les champs, s'attaquant aux villages lors de leur passage, sans toutefois oublier le rapt des femmes et d'hommes, non seulement sur la route Edea-Yaoundé⁶²⁷ mais également partout ailleurs. La théorie sur la politique agressive des troupes d'occupation se confirme.

⁶²⁶ Cf. Ilse Margret Luttmann, *Les Bassa sous l'influence des conditions coloniales allemandes* (1997), p. 160. 94 Entretien du 18. 1999 avec Noah Ebenda.

⁶²⁷ M. Aïo'o Menye, pp. 50-52.

Si l'on en croit la vieille Noah Ebenda, certains maris cocus auraient fermé les yeux pendant la guerre et percevaient en retour des sommes d'argent ramenées par leurs partenaires en flagrant de lit d'adultère avec les soldats français⁶²⁸.

Ces forfaits rythment le contexte colonial et correspondent par ailleurs aux pillages d'avant-guerre imputés à juste titre à la *Schutztruppe*.

IV- La retraite en Guinée

Les Allemands auraient-ils utilisé les Camerounais pour servir d'émissaires auprès du résident espagnol en vue de faciliter leur entrée en Guinée de Fernando Po? Plusieurs légendes sont en vue. L'on fait d'abord remarquer que les Ntoumou auraient même transporté « 102 lettres » à Nicomesseng à travers les pistes de la forêt dénommée des lors, « Afan bekalara », c'est-à-dire « la forêt des missives ». Ce point de vue paraît hasardeux.

Aucun document allemand n'atteste. En revanche, on sait que la retraite allemande s'est dirigée vers la Guinée, notamment à cause de la neutralité de l'Espagne pendant la guerre ; elle s'est effectuée sous tous azimuts sur les routes latéritiques du Sud-Cameroun à partir de Yaoundé : vers Olama-Lolodorf-Bipindi-Kribi, vers Ngoulemakon-Ebolowa-Efoulam, vers Ambam-Ntem-Campo⁶²⁹, etc.

D'après Hermann Skolaster, les soldats ayant emprunté 'axe Kribi ont reçu une forte hospitalité à Ngovayang, les bâtiments de l'école, de l'internat et les cases des maîtres avaient alors été mis à leur disposition”.

Accompagnés de plusieurs chefs et de leur famille, expression de la germanophile, les Allemands doivent aussi faire face à des réactions antipathiques, que les populations célèbrent à travers les chansons lyriques et qui transforment la force allemande en faiblesse: «Ebermaler, Ebermaler, a fui les Français. L'imbécile » ebol dzom « (Ventru on dirait une malle) s'en est allé avec Atangana Charles en

⁶²⁸ J. Aymerich, La conquête du Cameroun, p. 170 et carte pp. 184/185.

⁶²⁹ H. Sokaster, Die Pallotiner in Kamerun, p. 168. Sokaster, Die Pallotiner in Kamerun, p. 168.

Europe (Fulasi) »⁶³⁰.

Est-ce dire que les Camerounais avaient désormais réellement conscience que les Allemands étaient également vaincibles ? Sans doute.

Déjà attribués aux Allemands avant 1914, de petits surnoms circulent pour traduire la déception, parfois la satisfaction des populations.⁶³¹ Mais le départ des parents crée un sentiment de délaissement, d'abandon, une détresse répercutée par d'autres chansons d'exubérance réclamant leur retour. A l'adresse de Charles Atangana, le concert est le suivant: « Entends-tu seulement combien les Ewondo te réclament », « Eh, ah, eh, Atangana awogane Ewondo b'ayi nye⁶³² ». Que représentés ce mouvement?

Des 1915, la presse allemande⁶³³ publie de longues listes d'Allemands internes en Guinée mais également à Saragosse, à Cadix, à Pamplune, à Las Palmas, à Cordoba ou à Madrid. La liste des Allemands incomplète, totalise 138 prisonniers en 1915 et 250 prisonniers en tenant compte des femmes et des enfants?⁶³⁴

Des employés attentés dans les communications sont faits prisonniers à Douala par les Anglais des septembre 1914. En dehors du directeur des douanes Botefur, l'assesseur Dr. Bottcher, on retrouve le chef du port Klein, l'architecte Pick, des employés des Postes et télégraphes, Notnagel, Beetz et Blaezer. Ils sont transités à Lagos au Nigeria le 1^{er} octobre 1914 après avoir été retenus dans le vapeur Locoya⁶³⁵.

Conclusion

Dans cet article consacré aux fronts et frontières pendant la guerre, il a toujours été question des voies de communication si bien que la

⁶³⁰ Refrain de Barbare Abougou, entretien du 06. VI. 1996 à Ahala.

⁶³¹ Chanson conservée dans les traditions et transmise aux générations suivantes dès cette période

⁶³² DKB. 1915. DKB. 1916. pp. 122-124.203-212.

⁶³³ 102-DKB. 1915. p. 26.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ CF. Récit de Noah Ebenda en Annexe.

victoire du corps franco-britannique en est la conséquence de sa domination: la thalassocratie, maîtrise de la mer et l'hégémonie terrestre, direction militaire et politique, constituent ainsi un pouvoir au service des allées. Le chemin de fer apparaît comme une frontière susceptible de mettre le corps expéditionnaire hors du Cameroun, Français et Anglais ont fini par vaincre en traçant les nouvelles frontières.

Que penser des forces alliées victorieuses?

L'idée selon laquelle elles ont libéré les Camerounais de l'oppression est à nuancer : il y a eu également de nombreux abus commis par les soldats français et anglais, au même titre que ceux de la *Schutztruppe*, au moment de la conquête du Cameroun. Les voies de communication ont subi les assauts de tous les fronts.

Les alléluias des forces de libération sont donc tout autant à nuancer que la germanophile ou (et) la germanophobie des Camerounais. Les actes posés par les soldats en campagne n'ont pas du tout altéré la mémoire collective des contemporains⁶³⁶, témoins des événements, comme Charles Atangana⁶³⁷ et à l'extérieur du Cameroun, Paul Messi et Katherina Atangana qui dit: «Je ne m'étais bien senti aucun jour. Nous n'avons plus rien à nous dire, nous n'y pouvons rien. L'épreuve nous est venue du ciel jusqu'à ce que Dieu y mette fin. Gloire à Dieu pour les siècles des siècles, Amen».⁶³⁸

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⁶³⁶Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Cite par P. Messi in Jaunde Texte, pp. 286-287.

⁶³⁸Ibid

DKB, n° 18, 1914, p. 820.
 DKB, n° 23, 1914.
 DKB n° 1, janvier 1915.
 DKB, n° 2 février 1915.
 DKB, n° 3, mars 1915.
 DKB, n° 6, mars 1915.
 DKB, n° 24 décembre 1915.

Entretiens: Les enquêtes ont été menées et conservées depuis plus de douze ans, au moment où ces témoins directs étaient presque centenaires. Ils sont aujourd'hui décédés.

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Testing Hypotheses Developed in Cross-Disciplinary Studies: How Genetic Research helped illuminate Nso' History

By

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Abstract

We discuss how genetic evidence can be used to evaluate rival versions of the early history of the kingdom of Nso in the North West Region of Cameroon. Sex specific genetic data are shown to favour one specific variant of the oral history of the Nso in which the royal family traces its descent from a founding ancestress who married into an autochthonous hunter gathering group. The distribution of Y - chromosome and mitochondrial DNA variation in the Nso in general, and the ruling dynasty in particular, is consistent with their particular marriage practices, suggesting strict conservation of the royal social class along agnatic lines. This study demonstrates how genetics can usefully augment other sources of information (e.g., oral histories, archaeology and linguistics) when studying the history of African peoples.

Keywords: Cameroon Grassfields, Nso, Tikar, Genetic History

We are honoured to be given this opportunity to make our contribution to the festschrift marking the retirement of our friend and colleague, Professor Verkijika Fanson. During the years of our various collaborations, we have been struck by his devotion to teaching, from which his many students in the history department of the University of Yaounde I have greatly benefited, as well as his continuing interest in new research possibilities. This generous, open-handed approach has

led him to welcome many different visitors to Cameroon, and, reciprocally, created opportunities to undertake research abroad, most recently as a research fellow at the African Studies Centre, University of Cambridge, UK.

‘We are sure that other contributions to this Festschrift will trace his intellectual biography so we will not attempt to cover the cattle ground. Rather, we want to emphasize the important role his own history has played in a multi-disciplinary research project we undertook in collaboration with him. This project, made possible by Professor Fanso’s detailed knowledge of Nso’ lore and practice, has demonstrated how a) genetic research can sometimes help historians elucidate events that occurred prior to the local use of written records and b) the contribution the humanities can make to the formulation of alternative hypotheses that are amenable to genetic analysis. By careful analysis of frequencies of different characterizations of the non-recombining portion of the paternally inherited Y chromosome, it concluded that genetic data were more consistent with an oral historical account of a female migrant from the Tikar marrying a local Visale than with an alternative account in which she was accompanied in the migration by the male founder of the dynasty (Veeramah et al. 2008).

Building on and expanding the research undertaken in the Nso’ study we have, over the past decade, been working with Professor Fanso and one of his students to collect genetic data from a large number of different Cameroonian groups to study both the distribution of genetic variation amongst them and the interplay between social factors (for example language, location, religion, political structure, marriage customs and inheritance practices) and the extent and distribution of genetic variation. The humanities and genetic analysis can each present hypotheses to the other and, where expectations are formulated that would have distinct outcomes in data available to the other discipline, assess whether the probability that one or more of a range of possible outcomes are more or less likely than others.

The adopted approach is to complement analysis of exclusively genetic data with results from conventional historical research, so we

can see how the different approaches mutually inform one another. The work we did in Kumbo illustrates the potential of the approach. That we were successful in that study is in large measure due to Professor Fanzo's extensive knowledge. It was of critical importance that when he was helping us collect the original samples, he suggested that we ask additional questions of the informants, i.e. their caste-like affiliation. Without that local intimate knowledge, the subsequent study on the origin of the royal house of Nso described in this chapter would not have proved possible.

Although much of our readership will be familiar with the details of Nso history a summary is needed for those approaching it for the first time.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the history of western Cameroon was dominated by rival city states (also called kingdoms or *fondoms*). Their rivalries were a feature of the pre-colonial history of the Grassfields, the highlands which form the West and North West Regions (formerly Provinces) of present day Cameroon. Although they were not the only groups living in the region, these centralised polities dominated regional politics for centuries. Among these, one of the most celebrated is the *fondom* of Nso'. Working with Professor Fanzo, we analysed genetic data and threw new light on a subject of long-standing controversy among Nso' historians.

Nso is one of the Grassfields states whose royal family claims Tikar descent. (We do not wish to revisit here a complex topic which has been much discussed in the literature (see Jeffreys 1964, Chilver and Kaberry 1971, Price 1979, Fowler and Zeitlyn 1996). It is sufficient to note that like many but not all royal families in the region, the Nso' royal family traces its origins to the royal family of the Tikar of the Tikar Plain, from the area round present-day Bankim.

By the nineteenth century the Nso state had expanded, becoming in effect, a small empire that included surrounding ethnic groups, over whose control wars were fought with rival states such as the Bamum state centred on Foumban (Kaberry, 1962a, Tardits, 1980). There are oral history accounts of uncertain antiquity concerning the period before the establishment of the larger state which deal with the ethno genesis of the Nso people. The most common account is of a Tikar

princess called Ngonso travelling with followers from the Tikar region, approximately 100 km to the east, with her brothers (who separated off on the journey to found neighbouring settlements) before encountering a small indigenous group of hunter-gatherers (the Visale) amongst whom she settled (Mzeka 1990: 6-7). The sources conflict about her marital status. Mzeka (1980: 7-8, 38) states that she was accompanied by a husband, but most members of the Nso Historical Society⁶³⁹ claim that she arrived without an accompanying husband (Tatah Humprey Mbuy, personal communication). However, everyone agrees that her son became the first Fon of the Nso and it is from him that the current Fon is directly descended along the paternal line. (from Veeramah et al. (2008))

Nso' is unusual among the Grassfields kingdoms in having a system of named descent based social categories with varying rules of affiliation and transmission. They were first described by Kaberry (1952, 1959, 1962b) and Chilver and Kaberry (1960), more recently by Goheen (1996: 27-28) and Chem-Langhee and Fanso (1997: 315). The four groups are 1) the *won nto'* (patrilineal descendants of a Fon up to the fourth generation (for men) and third generation (for women)), 2) the *dny* (the so-called royal cadet lineages, patrilineal descendants of a Fon who ruled more than four generations ago (for men) and three generations ago (for women)), 3) the *nshiyilav* (*subjects* born into Palace service) and 4) the *mtaar* (*commoners*). The Fon has, through the generations, maintained a polygynous household, which today numbers over 70 women (Emmanuel Nkem Mbinglo, personal communication). Access to the Fon's wives has traditionally been strictly controlled with illicit unions subject to capital punishment (Chilver and Kaberry 1968: 99). While paternal descent from a Fon is a necessary precondition for enthronement, the new Fon's mother must, in the same tradition, be a *mtaar* (commoner) (Mzeka 1980: 7-8, 38).

Nso historical society is open to all Nso" people as well as non-Nso individuals undertaking research on Nso history and traditions. Address: Nso" History Society, Tourist Home, P.O. Box 33, Kumbo Nso", North West Province, Cameroon. Telephone number: 00237 3481765.

⁶³⁹Ibid

From surveys of Y chromosome types in other regions of sub-Saharan Africa, it is reasonable to conclude that the most common forms of the Y chromosome present in hunter-gatherer groups can be distinguished from those of agriculturalists. Since, in one account, Y chromosomes of present day male members of the royal family would have been inherited from a member of an agricultural group (the princess' husband having come from Tikar) and in the other from the hunter-gatherer Visale, it was possible to set alternative expectations for frequencies of Y chromosome types depending on the paternal origin of the first Fon. Expectations for the other caste-like groups would be different.

The rules of descent described earlier do not cover all possible cases, particularly where the change in status from *won mo'* to *duy* is concerned. Since this had implications for the distribution of genetic markers in the wider population we undertook research to clarify the position. The problem is this: the rules given above state that the *won mo'* are patrilineal descendants of a Fon up to the fourth generation (for men) and third generation (for women). There is some ambiguity especially about how the fourth generation is considered. To explore this a fictional family tree was drawn, designed to fit on a single side of paper which was used as the basis of a set of interviews with some knowledgeable Nso' in April 2007. The conclusion reached was that in the problematic fourth generation there is a degree of ambiguity and uncertainty when there are some female links in any particular descent line (informants varied in how strictly they followed a system of patrilineal descent). In practice however this ambiguity has not been seen as a problem in Nso'. The rule could be rephrased to remove uncertainty as follows: a person is a member of *won mo'* if she or he is both a child of a *won mo'* and a descendant of the Fon up to the fourth generation (if a man) and third generation (if a woman). There is also formal evidence of status (for example, and critically, if a father has the right to bestow his daughter in marriage he is not *won mo'*, but if he must offer her to the Palace to bestow in marriage he is a member of *won nto*). In addition, as Chem-Langhee and Fanso (1997) make clear, there are also controversial distinctions within the category of *won nto'* (possibly not all males of patrilineal descent from a Fon are eligible to

be Fon; some say that it is only sons conceived while a man is Fon who are eligible but others claim that those born before his selection are also eligible) but this does not affect the Y chromosome-based analysis of the paternal origin of the royal family. There are also distinctions within the category of *duy*. The *duy shingwan* (*duy* of the salt) and the *duy nsaansa'* (general *duy*), but these are also not relevant to our current discussion. Opinions varied also about whether the *Dgwerong* society could arbitrate when membership was disputed. However, at the boundary the question of membership does not appear to be controversial and none of our informants could recall any actual disputes about category membership. Our enquiries were viewed as abstract academic questions and not taken very seriously.

Analysis of sex-specific genomic data (the non-recombining portion of the paternally inherited Y-chromosome (NRY) and the maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)) has proved useful in elucidating the history of different ethnic groups where well defined alternative expectations of how genomic data would be associated with one or more alternative demographic histories can be formulated (see e.g. Tambets. et al/2004, Thomas et al. 2000). In the case of the Nso' variation in the distributions of NRY and mtDNA types in different caste-like groups and, more widely, different ethnic groups, made it possible to assess the consistence or otherwise of genetic data with one or another account of the foundation of the Nso' royal family. As expected if *Nso'* oral history accorded with actual events the NRY profile of the *won nto'* was both significantly different from that of other caste-like groups ($p < 0.01$) and more homogeneous while there were no such differences in the distribution of the maternally inherited mtDNA. The extremely common NRY type in the *won nto'* consequently named the *won nto'* modal haplotype) was present at greater than 50%. It was possible to conclude a) that providing there had not been any event of false paternity in the line of Fons genetic data are consistent with the Fon-ship having its paternal origin in a Visale b) that the Visale had probably joined the Nso' as one or more *mtaar* lineages and c) that the rules of descent may have evolved or be in the process of evolving into a more restricted paternal line structure. Interestingly the genomic data was also used to calculate the most

recent common ancestor of the present day descendants of the first Fon. Applying reasonable demographic models the upper limit was a little over 1.000years. Allowing for the wide confidence intervals associated with such calculations this is consistent with estimates based on oral history.

The Nso' study illustrates well the utility of genetic analysis in the study of African pre-history. It is, of course, to be viewed, not as a superior form of data taking precedence over, for, example, linguistics, anthropology or archaeology but only as one more source of information to, be evaluated alongside those from other fields. Just as genetic analysis can be applied to questions drawn from studies in the social sciences and humanities, it is similarly possible to pursue research in disciplines outside genetics by investigating possible causes of observation, made in the course of genetic analysis. Recent collaboration with Professor Fanzo has identified significant difference in sex specific genetic diversity (both paternal and maternal) between peoples in the north of Cameroon (the Nso' and those to the north of them) and peoples living the south, with diversity decreasing with distance south. It will be interesting to see what might be the possible causes of the difference; research which will require many of the insightful skills and detailed local knowledge our friend and colleague has honed and generously shared over a long and successful career.

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Transcending Academic Boundaries: Archaeology as Anthropology

By

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Abstract

This chapter shows the multi-disciplinary or dimensional facets of archaeology and how as one of the four sub-disciplines of Anthropology, it has over the years been referred to simply as Anthropology by some of its practitioners. This appellation is provoked by the fact that although archaeology is primarily interested in the cultures of extinct societies of the prehistoric past, in practice, it usually finds itself doing what the other sub-disciplines of Anthropology do. This is so because of the shortcomings inherent in its primary source of information, which is the material remains of extinct societies. It is for this reason that most archaeologists today are de facto anthropologists who in practice, transcend their traditional boundaries as they get to do what scholars of other sub-disciplines of Anthropology do so as to get a good understanding of the disjointed material remains for a better reconstruction and appreciation of the cultures of extinct societies.

Keywords: Archaeology, Anthropology, multidisciplinary, culture and artefacts.

Résumé

Ce chapitre montre les facettes multidisciplinaires ou multidimensionnelles de l'archéologie et comment en tant que l'une des quatre disciplines de l'Anthropologie, quelques praticiens l'ont

toujours appelé simplement l'Anthropologie. Cette appellation est provoquée par le fait que quoique l'archéologie s'intéresse principalement dans les cultures des sociétés disparues du passé préhistorique, en pratique, elle se trouve d'habitude en train de faire ce que d'autres sous-disciplines de l'Anthropologie font. Ceci est dû aux défauts inhérents dans sa principale source d'information, qui est le reste matériel des sociétés disparues. C'est pour cette raison que la plupart des archéologues aujourd'hui sont des anthropologues de facto, qui pratiquement traversent leurs limites traditionnelles en faisant ce que les chercheurs des autres sous-disciplines d'Anthropologie font pour avoir une bonne compréhension des restes matériels disjoints afin de mieux reconstruire et apprécier les cultures des sociétés disparues.

Mot clés: Archéologie, Anthropologie, multidisciplinaire, culture et artefacts

Introduction

Before we delve into the topic, it is good to first examine the word anthropology which in a broader sense is coined from two Greek words *anthropus*, meaning man and *logos*, meaning systematic study. Anthropology is therefore the systematic study of man⁶⁴⁰. It is the only discipline (amongst many) that studies man from a holistic view that is from his creation or origin to the present. It does this by using several principles and concepts).⁶⁴¹

Such an all-encompassing study of man is no doubt expensive and demanding for a single individual to undertake. This explains why anthropology is subdivided into sub-disciplines which handle different aspects of man using both common and specific methods. However, in the course of research and for better results, the activities of the sub-disciplines usually overlap into each other's sphere of influence.

⁶⁴⁰Feder Park Human Antiquity: An Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Archaeology. California: Mayfield Publishing Company. 2001: 11.

⁶⁴¹Phillip Stein and Bruce Rowe. Physical Anthropology New York: McGraw- Hill Publishing Company. 1989: 15

Sub disciplines of Anthropology

The first is **physical anthropology** which studies the biological and physical diversity of man in time and space. This means it is interested in the evolutionary history of man from origin till date as revealed by fossil remains, human genetic growth and development. It also examines the evolutionary history of non-humans or other primates like apes and monkeys and also the environment in which they existed.⁶⁴² Palynologists, palaeontologists and physicians are of this domain.

Linguistic Anthropology studies variations in time and space with regards to human languages. It also studies the languages of the present day societies so as to make inference about past languages with a kin interest in their evolution. Here we have Linguists.⁶⁴³

Socio-cultural Anthropology is interested in the study of socio-cultural relationships, organizations, and behaviour in human societies. Generally, it has to do with the study of the variety of cultures or material culture of present day human societies and those of the recent past. It is concerned with how houses are built or constructed, food is obtained, tools are made and the organization of the societies in terms of law, politics, kinship and kingship relationships.⁶⁴⁴ Sociologists and ethnographers are of this sub-discipline.

The last sub-discipline is **Archaeological Anthropology**, which like cultural anthropology also handles the study of cultures or life ways of especially extinct societies using their material remains. It is as Renfrew and Bahn maintain, “the past tense of cultural Anthropology”⁶⁴⁵. Archaeologists are best known for the study of the prehistory of man; that is the period before the introduction of writing

⁶⁴²Jolly, J.1 and Fred Plog. *Physical Anthropology and Archaeology* (4th Edition) New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1987

⁶⁴³Feder Park. *Human Antiquity: An Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Archaeology*. 2001: 11

⁶⁴⁴Collin Renfrew and Paul Bahn. *Archaeology Theories, Methods and Practice* New York: Thames and Hudson. 1996: 12

⁶⁴⁵ibid

less than 6000 years ago

What then is Archaeology?

Archaeology has been defined by most of its practitioners in different ways depending on their field experiences. Renfrew and Bahn define Archaeology as “partly the discovery of the treasures of the past; partly the meticulous work of the scientific analyst; partly the exercise of creative imagination⁶⁴⁶. To them, archaeology is also toiling and excavating under the sun and working or doing ethnographic work with indigenous groups like the Bushmen of South Africa.

In his book titled *An Invitation to Archaeology*, James Deetz expresses the opinion of most contemporary archaeologists when he maintains that “Archaeologists are anthropologists who usually excavate the material remains of past cultures and through the study of such evidence, attempt to recreate the history of man from his earliest past, and to determine the nature of cultural systems at different times and places around the world⁶⁴⁷ .

In an Inaugural Lecture delivered by Professor Thurston Shaw on 29 November 1963 at the University of Ibadan, he stated: “Archaeology comprises a system of techniques for deriving the maximum amount of information from material culture and physical remains which have been left behind by past generations of mankind which have survived to the present”.⁶⁴⁸

Many observers and even some practitioners only see a thin line between archaeology and history. They argue that both archaeology and history are interested in the past of man (though at different times) and for that reason, the two disciplines belong to the humanities. This might be so because they assist each other in rewriting the complete

⁶⁴⁶James Deetz. *Invitation to Archaeology*. New York: The Natural History Press.1967:3

⁶⁴⁷ThurstanShaw.*Archaeology and Nigeria, an Inaugural Lecture*, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. 1963: 12

⁶⁴⁸Bruce Trigger. “Aims in Prehistoric Archaeology” In *Antiquity* Vol. 44. 1970:36.

history of man⁶⁴⁹, Archaeologists depend on historical documents to locate archaeological sites and also to interpret some of their finds. On the other hand, what we know today as the history of Ancient Egypt, Ancient Ghana and Great Zimbabwe are mostly from the results of archaeological research conducted in those areas.

We should understand that more than 99 % of man's existence on earth was lived without written documents and the history of this period as we know today, has been reconstructed thanks to archaeology⁶⁵⁰. Some universities like the University of Buea, Cameroon and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, because of this, have decided to put the Department of Archaeology in the Faculty of Arts, just like history.

On the other hand, others are interested in the methodology used by archaeologists to achieve their objectives. Most of the methods used during survey and excavation, are scientific in nature. Based on the scientific nature of methods such as auger, probe, aerial and reconnaissance surveys and remote sensing, all borrowed from pure science like chemistry, physics and geology⁶⁵¹, which are discussed in details below, this group thinks archaeology should be under the Faculty of Science as it is the case in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria where BSc. and MSc degrees are offered in archaeology.

However, the definition of Shaw, like that of Deetz, is generally acceptable to most archaeologists and also reveals that the primary data of archaeologist are material cultural and physical remains of man. It should also be understood that in addition to material remains, archaeologists depend on oral traditions, documents and other sources for information on the past of man.

⁶⁴⁹Coll in Renfrew and Paul Bahn.1996:12.

⁶⁵⁰Ibid:67-110

⁶⁵¹Bassey, W. Andah, and Alex Okpoko. Practicing Archaeology in Africa, Ibadan: Wisdom Publisher Limited 1994:45).

Archaeological Data

Archaeological data could broadly be divided into material cultural remains and material physical remains. Material cultural remains or artefacts, the primary data, are the relics of things which man made and used that have survived the destructive forces of nature and man and have been identified and recovered by archaeologists. In other words they are referred to by some archaeologists as, modified portable objects which help us as archaeologists to understand human technological prowess and its evolution or progress over the years. They include things like stone hammer, clay pots, hoes, spears to name a few. Most often these are referred to as artefacts because they are portable and could be transported from the archaeological site to a laboratory for better analyses if the archaeologist chooses to⁶⁵².

It should also be emphasised that though artefacts are the best source of information for technological changes over the years, they can also furnish man with information about other aspects of the society's culture. For example, clay from a broken pot could be used to obtain a date for the artefact⁶⁵³ and even for the site where it was found. Pictorial decorations or the decorative symbols found on the pot shreds might help shed light on the belief system of those concerned and their relationship with the neighbours. This might be so if some of the decorative motifs represent various gods.⁶⁵⁴

Other material cultural remains include features like ruins of buildings, shrines and other sites believed to be of cultural importance to the extinct or pre-historic society under study. Features are fixed remains which cannot be moved from the site to the laboratory and are best examined *in-situ* or in the original context in which they exist. They might include humanly modified components of a site such as storage pit, rubbish dump, hearths, graves, ruins of buildings and toilet

⁶⁵²Renfrew Collin and Bahn Paul. 1996:46

⁶⁵³Peter Peregrine N. Peter 2001:192

⁶⁵⁴Patrick J, Munson. "Recent Archaeological Research in Dhar Tichitt Region of South Central Mauritania" in The West African Archaeological Newsletter No.10. 1968 :6-13

holes. Features if jointly examined usually give a picture of the complexities of life on the archaeological site.

Material physical remains are those things which might give information about the physical aspects of man and the environment in which he lived. They include bones, finger nails and hair of man and, pollen grains, leaves and seeds of plants. In some instances, they are referred to as ecofacts because they provide information about the components of the natural environment and how man interacted with them in order to survive. In other words, they might provide clues on why and how, for example, a particular plant or crop came to be domesticated.

The archaeologist, Munson, in his study of different plant seeds from the ancient site of Dhar Tichitt in Mauretania, concluded from the evidence he got, that the people of Dhar Tichitt were experimenting on different wild grasses and finally, probably due to genetic changes and increase yields, chose to domesticate pennisetum above other grains.⁶⁵⁵ Plant remains could also be used to determine not only the vegetation and soils of a place, but also the climate of the site because different plants survive under different climatic conditions and soils.

Bones of animals or humans recovered from archaeological sites have been used by palaeontologists to reconstruct the physical evolutionary tree or stages of man from the early placental mammals (Eutheria) to the present day *Homo Saplens Saplens*⁶⁵⁶. Animal bones might also provide information about the vegetation and climate of a particular site because animals also survive under different climates and vegetation's. Bones of crocodiles and hippopotamus were discovered in the present day Sahara Dessert, an indication that about 5000 years ago the Sahara was transversed by big streams and a luxuriant vegetation to have accommodated such animals⁶⁵⁷. Material remains

⁶⁵⁵Robert Dott and Roger, L Batten. Evolution of the Earth .New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1988:605- 611

⁶⁵⁶Peters S.W.1987 "The Quaternary of Africa" in Foundations of Civilizations in Tropical Africa (eds.) Bassey Andah and Alex Okpoko: I-1984:1-14.

⁶⁵⁷Peter Peregrine N. 2001. Archaeological Research: A Brief Introduction, New

are usually recovered through some of the most important methods like field surveys and excavations of archaeological sites.

A Synopsis of Archaeological Procedure

This has to do with a summation of the general course or steps followed by archaeologists during archaeological research. This might differ from archaeologist to archaeologist depending on the nature of the research, but there are certain must-do things archaeologists generally perform in the course of their research. In the course of examining the procedure or steps archaeologists usually follow during field research, this chapter demonstrate how their activities overlap into other disciplines, thus going beyond their period or domain of study, which is primarily prehistory when there were no documents, into protohistory, a historical period with a few documents available, and history, a period with enough documents containing the activities of man.

Effective Archaeological research usually starts with the discovery of an archaeological site, which is any space on the earth's surface that demonstrates or exhibits any evidence of human interaction with the environment, especially in the distant past. The site as a rule is surveyed in order to better ascertain its content in terms of material remains and features⁶⁵⁸ In the course of surveying, archaeologist as a matter of necessity, also need the knowledge or assistance of other academic disciplines like geography, biology and mathematics so as to better understand the natural environment in relation to the material culture of the extinct man and clearly map out their distribution on the site and also how this environmental dynamics have affected human culture over the years.⁶⁵⁹

Survey takes different forms, but the most common called reconnaissance survey, demands the movement on foot up and down an archaeological site by archaeologists. This could either be randomly or systematically done. With random survey, the archaeologist moves

Jersey: Prentice Hall. 2002:1-14.

⁶⁵⁸Bassey, W. Andah, and Alex Okpoko, 1994:7

⁶⁵⁹Ibid, 121

up and down the site taking note of sections with surface material remains. Although random survey is not very scientific and tends to push the attention of the archaeologist towards sections with visible surface artefacts, the archaeologists must use his knowledge of geography to map out the location of the artefacts on the site and their relationship to each other. This kind of survey does not usually cover the whole site, but it gives a general knowledge of artefact distribution on the site.

On the other hand, systematic survey demands that the archaeologist divides the site into equal squares which are surveyed one after the other. This is usually very intensive and gives a detail account of artefact distribution on the site. In some instances not all the grids are surveyed, probably due to time and financial constraints. Under such circumstances, some archaeologists chose to randomly select the grids to be intensively surveyed.

Other forms of survey are so scientific requiring at times, the services of experts to perform the functions for the archaeologist. They include auger which requires the sending into the earth's subsurface of a rod which brings out soil whose content is examined by specialists to detect the presence of any material remains. Probes on the other hand, require that a rod be sent into the ground with the specialist listening to the noise produced by the rod as it goes through hollows or strike rocks on its way down. From the sound, the specialist is in a position to know whether there are material cultural remains buried under the ground or not. Both methods are at times destructive, especially when the rod cuts through some of the artefacts destroying them before they are eventually recovered.

Aerial survey is the use of planes equipped with remote sensing devices to fly over large archaeological sites which might not be effectively surveyed on foot, and take pictures. Pictures taken from such planes are used by specialist to determine the level of material remains and their distribution on the site. Depending on the angle, from which the pictures were taken, they might be used in drawing up the contours of the site.

Magnetic survey and remote sensing, all borrowed from pure science like chemistry, physics and geology are like probes and auger

good for subsurface detection of material remains. But unlike auger and probes whose rods might destroy some of the material remains before they are recovered, magnetic survey and remote sensing is not destructive. It involves just sending various kinds of energy through the soil and this will enable the archaeologist or expert concern to read any anomalies encountered by the energy as it goes into the soil. Such anomalies are usually caused by the material remains of man found within the Soil.⁶⁶⁰

After survey, the site is usually excavated. Excavation is the systematic digging of a marked area of an archaeological site by an archaeologist. The digging could either be done horizontally or vertically depending on the nature of the site and the questions the archaeologist is out to answer. If the site is a large complex urban one as it is with some Iron Age sites, horizontal excavation, which might open just one layer that covers a greater portion of the site to reveal the spatial relationships between artefacts and features in that layer is preferable. With smaller size sites which were settled more than once like those of the Early Stone Age hunters and gatherers, vertical excavation which cuts through many cultural layers is the best.

Everything being equal, excavation usually takes place after subsurface survey must have revealed that there are artefacts or material remains buried under the earth surface and also to better answer some of the questions survey might not have answered. During excavation, for example, archaeologists usually use the principles of stratigraphy, stratification and super imposition very common with geological practices, not only to analyse the material remains found within the layers of the soil but also to ascertain the relative dating of the material remains and by extension of the site⁶⁶¹.The principle of superimposition in the study of soil stratification, and as used by archaeologists on archaeological sites during excavation, maintains that older human deposits exist in the lower layers of an undisturbed

⁶⁶⁰Peter Peregrine N. Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember .Archaeology: Original Readings in Method and Practice, New Jersey: Prentice Hall 2002:70-75

⁶⁶¹Gordon, V.ChiIdePlecing Together the Past: The Interpretation of Archaeological Data, London.1964:11.

excavated pit, while recent human depositions are found in the upper layers of the pit. The existence of the earth's subsurface in different layers, gives the basis for the relative dating of the materials found in the layers.

Limitations of Archaeological Data

Generally, the material cultural and physical remains recovered during survey and excavation are classified or carefully arranged so as to better appreciate and interpret them. Unfortunately, material remains often have serious handicaps and limitations which make interpretation, rather complex and tricky. We should understand that material remains are not collected as an end in themselves but as a means for people to recreate the cultures of extinct societies whose histories were not or poorly documented.

Material remains by nature are silent. They are not human beings who can talk and tell or narrate their stories or histories. It is, therefore, left to the archaeologist, the professional in this domain, to make sense out of the material remains by placing together the fragment of information deduced from them⁶⁶². At times, a good number of the recovered material remains are so fragile and disjointed and cannot be transported from the site to the laboratory for better examination and analysis. Generally, physical or organic material remains hardly survive because natural and human activities like decay, erosion, weathering, farming, fire and construction works usually destroy them or affect the original context in which they existed. The quantity that survives for archaeologists to recover, at times, might be so small for any real, sense to be made out of it.

The above problems make the work of the archaeologist especially during the interpretation stage to be complex and complicated. As a result of this, archaeologists usually work like police detectives trying to reconstruct the scene of a crime where the criminals are long gone by putting together the bits and pieces of information deduced from

⁶⁶²Bassey, W. Andah African Development in Cultural Perspective. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. 1982:5

the material remains for a better understanding of man's past life ways.

Overcoming the shortcomings

To overcome the above shortcomings, intrinsic in their primary data, the material remains, archaeologists are forced to turn to other academic disciplines for assistance so as to better appreciate the past of man. In doing this, they go beyond their traditional boundaries as their activities overlap, thus getting into other academic disciplines, most of them sub-disciplines' of anthropology.

The limitations inherent in the material cultural remains, for example, have forced archaeologist to study material culture of present day societies so as to better appreciate the material culture of extinct societies. They do this because they believe there is continuity and change in human behaviour and as man struggles to overcome the hurdles of life, certain aspects of his culture are modified, transformed or maintained so as to enable him adapt and meet up with the new challenges. This is usually rewarding where it is established that there is a historical or genetic link between the present day society and the extinct one. When archaeologists do this kind of studies, they are involved in a focused ethnographic research first as sociologists and ethnographers with the sole aim of using the results to better interpret their disjointed archaeological data.

Those aspects of man's material culture which have survived the hurdles of time and are still present in contemporary societies are good data for the study and interpretation of material remains of extinct cultures. Man's culture is historically dynamic and not static.⁶⁶³ Those which have changed or have been modified over the years also attract the interest or attention of the archaeologist to know what caused the changes, Such information might lead the researcher into understanding the evolution of socio-cultural relationships such as kinship and kingship, settlement patterns, political systems and structures over time.

⁶⁶³Stiles. S.D "Ethnoarchaeology: A Discussion of Methods and Applications" in MAN Vo1.12:87-103.Stiles 1977: 88

When archaeologists undertake ethnographic research for the purpose of a better interpretation of their disjointed data, they are referred to as Ethno archaeologists⁶⁶⁴ or Living Archaeologist.⁶⁶⁵ This is usually easier as mentioned earlier, when the present day society is directly linked with the extinct society under study. At times simple analogy of present day cultural materials which are similar to those of extinct societies even where no direct historical or genetic link has been established might also be useful⁶⁶⁶.

However, Ethno archaeology is more than this. It is archaeology involving ethnographic research; that is ethnographic research undertaken by an archaeologist who does not depend on the works of professional ethnographers or cultural anthropologists. Such professionals have no interest in understanding man's past during their studies. In the course of doing this, archaeologists like ethnographers, usually interact with the people whose material culture they are studying, asking specific questions, participating in and observing some of the activities before drawing conclusions.

Archaeologists often choose to personally undertake their own ethnographic research because they have specific questions or worries which are different from those of ethnographers. They are interested in knowing the present so as to better interpret the past because they believe there is a link between the past and the present. It is in this direction that Shaw maintained that archaeological techniques are not only used in the discipline of prehistory, but also in the disciplines of protohistory, history and even in the study of contemporary peoples⁶⁶⁷. This overlapping attitude of archaeology also provoked James Deetz to stress the fact that "archaeology uses material remains to recreate the complete history of man from his earliest past to the present"⁶⁶⁸.

⁶⁶⁴Gould. R.A.1980. Living Archaeology Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1980: X.

⁶⁶⁵Anderson Keith. "Ethnographic Analogy and Archaeological Interpretation" in SCIENCE Vol. 163 No. 3863: 1969:133-137

⁶⁶⁶Thurstan Shaw. 1963:12

⁶⁶⁷Ibid

⁶⁶⁸Renfrew Collin and Bahn Paul. 1996:22

This Chapter should also reiterate the fact that the material remains recovered by archaeologists are varied in nature. Some of them like the carbonized papyri discovered in Pompeii⁶⁶⁹, contain information which if deciphered could give an idea about language, a very important aspect of man's culture. Archaeologists in the course of their research usually seek assistance from linguistic anthropologists, who are specialised in the study of the structure, usage and evolution of languages over time and space. In doing so, archaeologists find themselves getting into linguistic anthropology for a better interpretation of material remains. Some recovered material remains do not have any direct link with the prime concern of archaeologists who are recreating the cultures or life ways of extinct societies.

Archaeologists for example, have over the years in the course of field work (excavation) come across bones of animals and man as well as remains of plants. These discoveries have made them not only to be interested in the culture of man but also in knowing the physical structure or build-up of man at different times in the past as well as the physical structure of animals which lived in the wild and those he domesticated and depended on for food. Though not trained in the techniques of physical anthropology, they have over the years provided palaeontologists and palynologists with the data from which they got answers about the physical evolutionary history of man and the environment in which he lived. The fact that Africa is the cradle of man and the knowledge of the physical evolutionary history of man) earlier discussed, was made known thanks to material physical remains(human fossils) provided by archaeologists like Richard Leakey and his wife, who worked in some parts of East Africa from their field surveys and excavations to physical anthropologists⁶⁷⁰. Some archaeologists have even gone to the extent of acquainting themselves with the techniques of physical anthropology so as to better appreciate their fragile and disjointed material remains while on the field before calling in expert assistance.

⁶⁶⁹Robert H.Dott and Roger L. Batten. 1988:605

⁶⁷⁰Bassey. W. Andah, and Alex Okpoko, *Practicing Archaeology in Africa*. 1994:11

Conclusion

The overlapping nature of archaeology into the sub-disciplines of anthropology is because these new disciplines are yet to develop a theoretical framework that is universally acceptable to all its practitioners.⁶⁷¹ The most important obstacle is the limitations inherent in its primary data, material remains and the fact that it conventionally deals with extinct societies whose inhabitants had long died. As a result of this, in the course of analyses and interpretation of material remains from archaeological sites, archaeologists consciously or unconsciously, usually put in a dose of subjectivity in their conclusions since some of the conclusions are based on assumptions which cannot be scientifically verified.⁶⁷² As a best next alternative to overcoming the limitations, archaeologists are forced to consult a variety of sources and specialists, and even learn some additional techniques from geographers, geologists, pedologists, architects, linguists, sociologists, ethnographers, biologists, and historians⁶⁷³.

These overlapping into other anthropological sub-disciplines justify the fact that in all approaches, archaeologists are defacto anthropologists. This has made some individuals to consider archaeologists as “Jack of all trades and master of none”. This statement is far from the truth because such overlapping during field work by archaeologists are meant for a better understanding of past cultures and an archaeologist does not at any moment in the course of the overlapping, pretend to be any other person than an archaeologist. Though the overlapping are meant to overcome the problems faced by archaeologist, not all the problems are or have been successfully sorted out. One good example of this is that, it is still not very clear how one can easily and very successfully deduce non-material aspects of culture from material culture.⁶⁷⁴ Nevertheless, this chapter strongly asserts that in order to achieve their objectives, archaeologists go beyond their

⁶⁷¹Bassey. W.Andah. 1982:25

⁶⁷²Bassey. W. Andah, and Alex Okpoko.1994:10

⁶⁷³Ibid: 12

⁶⁷⁴Mart in Shaw, Politics and Globalisation, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 80.

academic field into the other anthropological sub-disciplines and this qualifies them also as anthropologists.

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The Multiple Frontiers of Globalisation: The Case of Politico-Diplomatic Globalisation

By
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Abstract

The international system emerging after the disintegration of the bipolar cold war is more open, more interdependent and definitely less Eurocentric. Multi-culturalism, multiple-identities and anti-foundationalism have become fashionable themes, not only in academic discourse, but in international politics. Contrary to popular thinking, globalisation is not only an economic phenomenon concerned with economic growth, but it is a multi-dimensional process encompassing political, diplomatic, social, cultural, scientific and technological development. In this study, an attempt is made to examine how politics and diplomacy have contributed to global interconnectedness. This chapter argues that constructive interdependence in all domains within the international system is needed not only to better share the benefits of prosperity, but also to achieve mutual understanding of the challenges of globalisation, respect and tolerance.

Key Words: Globalisation, Frontiers, Politics, Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights, Diplomacy, Foreign Policy.

Résumé

Le système international naissant après la désintégration de la guerre froide bipolaire est plus ouvert, plus interdépendant et définitivement, moins euro centrique. Le multiculturalisme, les multiples identités et

l'anti fondamentalisme sont devenus des thèmes à la mode, non seulement dans tes discours académiques, mais aussi dans la politique internationale. Contrairement à la pensée populaire, la mondialisation n'est pas seulement un phénomène économique en rapport avec le développement économique, mais elle est également un processus multidimensionnel englobant le développement politique, diplomatique, social, cultural, scientifique et technologique. Dans cette étude, nous essayons d'examine comment politique et diplomatie ont contribué à l'interdépendance constructive dans tous les domaines à l'intérieur du système international est nécessaire non seulement pour mieux distribuer les bénéfices de la prospérité, mais aussi pour atteindre une compréhension mutuelle des défis de la mondialisation que sont Le respect et la tolérance.

Mots clés: Mondialisation, Frontières, Politique, Démocratie, Bonne gouvernance, Droits de l'homme, Diplomatie, politique étrangère.

Introduction

The world at the start of the 21st century is much more interconnected than it was in the 20th century. Messages and information can be sent to any part of the world at a small cost. Similarly people can move very quickly and comparatively inexpensively. Therefore, travel for both business, family reunion and tourism, have dramatically escalated. Further, goods can be transported more cheaply due to the improved techniques of transport and also due to the lowering of the weight and bulk of commodities, so the value-weight ratio has increased markedly in many areas. Perhaps, the most spectacular aspect of this interconnectedness is the ease with which information can flow. Reference here is made of the television, telephone, writing of e-mail and the overall internet connections.

It should be noted that this interconnection was masterminded by the paradigm of liberalism which was challenged by communism, fascism, nationalism, socialism and totalitarian dictatorship.

The notion of globalisation has been hotly debated, not least the definitions advanced by different authors as exemplified in a variety of

scholarly works. Therefore, this concept has inspired numerous competing definitions and interpretations. According to Martin Shaw, globalisation is a complex set of distinct but related processes such as economic, political, diplomatic, social, cultural, military and technological aspects through which social relations have come to be understood in a common world framework⁶⁷⁵. This implies that globalisation involves the development of transnational relations of many kinds as well as specifically global forms.

Immanuel Wallerstein describes it as a process whereby regional economies, societies and cultures have become integrated through a globe-spanning network of communication and trade.⁶⁷⁶ It is usually recognized as being driven by a combination of economic, technological, political, socio-cultural and also military factors. Meanwhile, Michael Mann has defined globalisation as a term referring to the transnational circulation of ideas, languages or popular culture through acculturation.⁶⁷⁷

Saskia Sassen who tends to be more encompassing, holds that a good part of globalisation consist of an enormous variety of micro-processes that begin to denationalise what has been constructed as national-whether policies, capital, political, subjectivity, diplomatic urban spaces, temporal frames, or any other of a variety of dynamics and domains.⁶⁷⁸

As for Anthony Giddens, this process is defined as the diminution or elimination of state enforced restrictions on exchanges across borders and the increasingly integrated and complex global system of production and exchange that has emerged as a consequence.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁵Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System: Origins of the European World Economy*, London, Academic Press, 1995, p. 92

⁶⁷⁶Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 56.

⁶⁷⁷Saskia Sassen, *The Globalised World*, New York, Pianka Press, 2001, p. 102.

⁶⁷⁸Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 78.

⁶⁷⁹Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalisation: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2000, p. 88.

On the part of Jan Aart Scholte, the process is regarded as the growing deterritorialisation or super-territorialisation of various activities.⁶⁸⁰ In this way, stock markets could be anywhere and all the traders in the world could move from their various locations and operate from one South Sea Island or alternatively, they could all work from home.

In the view of Robert W. McChesney, globalisation is the process whereby capitalism is increasingly constituted on a trans-national basis not only in the trade of goods and services, but even more importantly, in the flow of capital and on the trade of currencies and financial investment?⁶⁸¹ Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson have tended to complement McChesney in describing it as the interdependence and the interpretation of political, diplomatic, economic, social and cultural relationships across existing borders and boundaries.⁶⁸²

Wikipedia⁶⁸³ has tended to be more englobing as it refers to globalisation as a worldwide phenomenon of political, diplomatic, economic, technological and cultural exchanges, engendered by modern communication, transportation and legal infrastructure as well as the political choice to consciously open cross-border links in international trade and finance. It describes how people have become intertwined with each other around the world politically, economically and culturally.

The United Nations Organisation (UNO) has also described globalisation as follows:

⁶⁸⁰Robert W. McChesney, *Capitalism and the Information Age, the Political Economy of the Global Communication*, Washington, Dalin Press, 2002, p. 106.

⁶⁸¹Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalisation in Question*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 107.

⁶⁸²<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalisation>.

ERLINK

"<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalisation>." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalisation>
[u](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalisation).

⁶⁸³James Richards, *A Diplomatic History*, New York, Pianka Press, 2001, p. 97.

It is a widely-used term that can be defined in a number of different ways. When used in an economic context, it refers to the reduction and removal of barriers between national borders in order to facilitate the flow of goods, capital, service and labour. Globalisation is not a new phenomenon. It began in the late 19th century, but it slowed down during the period from the start of the First World War until the third quarter of the 20th century. This slow down can be attributed to the inward-looking politics pursued by a number of countries in order to protect their respective industries.⁶⁸⁴

From the above definitions and descriptions, it is clear that globalisation has different meanings and interpretations to different people. It can mean the formation of a global village which is a contact between different parts of the world, with increasing possibilities of personal exchange, mutual understanding and friendship between “world citizens” and creation of a global civilisation. It can again mean globalism, if the concept is reduced to its economic perspective, that is, laissez-faire capitalism and neo-liberalism. In the domain of management, it is a strategic term that refers to the emergence of international markets, needs and tastes.⁶⁸⁵ In its cultural form, globalisation has been a label used to identify attempts to erode the national cultures and subsume them into a global culture whose members will be much easier to manipulate through mass media and controlled governments. In brief, therefore, globalisation has to do with the growing integration of politics, diplomacy, economies and societies in general around the world.

Background

The process of globalisation has been a long one. It is not just a characteristic of the last few decades, but something that has

⁶⁸⁴Richard Falk, “State of Siege: Will Globalisation Win Out?” *International Affairs*, Vol. 72, No.1, 1998, p. 123.

⁶⁸⁵Andre Gunder Frank, *Global Challenges*, London, Wilian Press, 1998, p. 110.

developed, sometimes erratically, over many centuries. Therefore, the origins of globalisation have engendered a lot of debate among scholars. Some hold that its origins can be traced in the modern period while some look at it as a phenomenon with a long history. An economist, Andre Gunder Frank, who is associated with the dependency theory, argues that globalisation has been in existence since the emergence of trade links between Sumer and the Indus Valley civilisation in the third millennium BC.⁶⁸⁶ It should also be mentioned that an early form of globalised economics and culture existed during the Hellenistic age which was the period when commercialised urban centres were focused around the axis of Greek culture that stretched from India to Spain, with important cities such as Alexandria, Athens and Antioch at the centre⁶⁸⁷.

During this time equally, trade was widespread and it was the very first time that the notion of a cosmopolitan culture emerged. According to Scholte, globalisation in trade links had been perceived by the Roman empire, the Parthian empire and the Han dynasty and this articulation and dynamisation of commercial links between these powers tended to be a great source of inspiration in the development of the silk trade.⁶⁸⁸ The yearly trade must have got to the 300,000 tons mark considering the fact that 300 Greek ships sailed between the Greco-Roman World and India.⁶⁸⁹

The golden age of Islam was another primordial early stage of globalisation. This was the time during which Jewish and Moslem traders as well as explorers created a sustained economy across the old world resulting in a globalisation of crops, trade, knowledge and technology.⁶⁹⁰ For example, during this period, very important crops like sugar and cotton were widely cultivated in much of the Muslim world and a cosmopolitan culture was created due to the study of

⁶⁸⁶Ibid

⁶⁸⁷Scholte, *Globalisation: A Critical Introduction*, p. 95.

⁶⁸⁸Hirst and Thompson, *Globalisation in Question*, p. 110.

⁶⁸⁹Ibid. p. 116.

⁶⁹⁰Ibid. p.117.

Arabic.⁶⁹¹ The Mongol empire, to a large extent accelerated travel along the Silk Road and this afforded travellers and missionaries the opportunity to journey from one part of Eurasia to the other. This equally saw the establishment of the first international postal service and also the rapid transmission of epidemic diseases such as the bubonia plaque across the newly unified regions of Central Asia.⁶⁹²

Globalisation witnessed a major change during the age of discovery in which Eurasia and Africa were involved in substantial cultural, material and biologic exchange with the new world. Again, towards the end of the 16th century, Portugal established trading posts from Africa to Asia and Brazil to handle the trade of local products such as gold, spices and timber, while the European colonisation of the Americas, the widespread exchange of plants, animals, foods, human populations and culture were equally aspects of global interactional.⁶⁹³ This concept was, further, promoted by the emergence of European maritime empires such as Portugal, Spain, Holland and Great Britain.⁶⁹⁴

It should be stated that globalisation become a private business phenomenon in the 17th century at the time when chartered companies such as the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company were founded in 1600 and 1602 respectively.⁶⁹⁵ In the 19th century, due to her advanced manufacturing technology which ameliorated global communications like the steamship, and railroads, Britain became the first world economic giant.⁶⁹⁶ The steamship was the first big development that liberated human beings from the narrow and limited range of sources of energy. This quickly led to the steam train, which enabled people to travel fast and cheaply over long distances once the track was laid.

By the last third of the 19th century, this led to a big expansion of the fast travel within Europe, and it was now possible for large

⁶⁹¹Sassen, *The Globalised World*, p. 100. 19

⁶⁹²Ibid

⁶⁹³Ibid

⁶⁹⁴Frank, *Global Challenges*, p. 116

⁶⁹⁵Ibid. p. 120.

⁶⁹⁶Ibid

countries such as the U.S and Canada to operate as single states, because people could move from one end to the other much faster than it was in the past. Similarly, the railway made India much more easy to rule as a single entity. Steam equally revolutioned shipping and made it faster and more reliable. By 1900, it took half the time to move from London the Calcutta. Before the advent of the steam, only the wealthy class could afford to travel long distances.

This process was also masterminded by big population movements especially from Europe to North America, so much so that between 1820 and 1920, 38 million Europeans emigrated to the U.S⁶⁹⁷. Earlier, there was the big involuntary movements of slaves from Africa to both North and South America, prior to 1770, more African enslaved persons went to America than Europeans.⁶⁹⁸

The 19th century, however, witnessed the advent of globalisation in its modern form and this modern degree was just the continuation of a long historical process. Industrialisation provided for cheap production of household goods, while fast population growth created sustained demand for commodities. It should be stated that during this era, globalisation was tacitly shaped by 19th century imperialism.

Joseph Spinker writes:

After the Opium wars and the completion of British conquest of India, vast populations of these regions became ready consumers of Europeans exports, and it was during this epoch in which areas of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific Islands were incorporated” into the world system.⁶⁹⁹

Therefore, the conquest of new parts of the globe by Europeans particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, yielded valuable natural resources such as rubber, diamonds and coal a contributed in dynamising trade and investment between the European imperial powers, their colonies and

⁶⁹⁷Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, p. 90.

⁶⁹⁸Joseph Spinker, *Globalisation and its Challenges*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001, p, 109.

⁶⁹⁹Ibid

the U.S.A.⁷⁰⁰

However, the first phase of modern globalisation started to breakdown with the advent of the First and Second World Wars and in the mid-20th century, according to John Baylis and Steve Smith globalisation was principally motivated by the global expansion of multinational corporations based in the U.S and Europe, and worldwide exchange of new developments' the scientific domain, technology and products, with most significant inventions of this time that originated from the western world.⁷⁰¹ The worldwide export of western culture passed through the new mass media: film, radio and television and also recorded music. Development a growth of international transport and telecommunication played a very important role in modern globalisation.

Democracy and Globalisation

Democracy is a very important component of political globalisation. Democracy may be a word familiar to most people, but it is a concept still misunderstood and misused, since communists, fascists, military, dictatorships and totalitarian regimes claim to be democratic. The term has come to be so tied to the aspirations of most of the world's population that practically no political leader anywhere dares reject its label. Anthony Arblaster, defines democracy as government by the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.⁷⁰² But in the phrase of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people.⁷⁰³

Democracy is a set of ideas and principles about freedom, but it

⁷⁰⁰John Baylis and Steve Smith, *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 79.

⁷⁰¹Anthony Blaster, *Democracy*, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, 1989, p. 5.

⁷⁰²Ibid

⁷⁰³Ibid. p. 14.

also consists of a set of practices and procedures that have been moulded through a long, often tortuous history. Therefore, democracy could be described as the institutionalisation of freedom. For this reason, it is possible to identify the time-tested fundamentals of constitutional government, human rights and equality before the law that any society must possess to be properly described as democratic.

Democracy falls into two basic categories, that is, direct and representative. In a direct democracy, all citizens without the intermediary of elected or appointed officials, can participate in making public decisions, but the modern society with its size and complexity can only be possible through the representative democracy.⁷⁰⁴ Notwithstanding the discussion above, it should be stated that there is no single blue print for democracy. Each country's needs, history and cultural heritage are different, but according to Baylis and Smith, there is the globalisation of democratic practice in what he describes as the dimensions of democracy. Experience and research show that democracy has four key dimensions: the rule of law and respect for human rights, accountable and effective institutions, a free and fair political process and citizen participation.⁷⁰⁵

No democracy can function without a reasonable standard of justice and protection of human rights based on the rule of law. Protecting the equal rights of all citizens including marginalised groups is a critical feature of an effective legal system. Clear rules and regulations and an independent judiciary form the cornerstones of such a system. Another important dimension of democracy is the strengthening of the institutions of democratic and accountable governance. Therefore, effective, responsive and accountable institutions make a democracy workable. This includes support for the effective and transparent provision of goods and services and the creation of conditions necessary for economic growth.

Political freedom, competition and protection of minority rights are the essence of a democratic state and society. They constitute the

⁷⁰⁴Baylis and Steve, *The Globalisation of World Politics*, p. 87.

⁷⁰⁵Jeffrey Goldharb, *After the Fall: The Pursuit of Democracy in Central Europe*, New York, Basic, 1992, p. 89.

vehicles for people to debate public priorities, air alternative views, and win support for proposed remedies. The process of contestation allows majorities to determine politics for a given period of time within a broadly accepted constitutional framework that should also protect minority rights. Citizenship participation and advocacy play an important role in the democratisation process. In this case durable democratic transitions may be driven by a broad-based civil society movement rather than by reforms introduced from abroad.

In the view of Jeffrey Goldfarb, we live in a time when the call for freedom and democracy echoes across the globe, for example, Eastern Europe has cast off the totalitarian governments of almost half a century, and the republics of the former Soviet Union have replaced the communist regime of almost 75 years with a new democratic order.⁷⁰⁶ This global phenomenon belled the sceptics who contended that modern liberal democracy is a uniquely western artefact that could never be successfully replicated in non-western cultures.

President George W. Bush of the U.S.A in his second inaugural address, January 2005, made this statement:

It is the policy of the U.S.A to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and every culture, with the goal of ending tyranny in the world. All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know, the US will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for liberty, we will stand with you.⁷⁰⁷

In the same vein, Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, on 11 December 2005, looked at the democratic values as follows:

The goals of our state craft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international

⁷⁰⁶US A ID, At Freedom's Frontiers: A Democracy and Governance Strategic Framework, www.USAID.Gov.

⁷⁰⁷Ibid

system. Attempting to draw neat, clean lines between our security interests and our democratic ideals does not reflect the reality of today's world. Supporting the growth of democratic institutions in all nations is not some flight of fancy, it is the only realistic response to our present challenge.⁷⁰⁸

Freedom House⁷⁰⁹ estimated that 65 of the world's 165 sovereign states, constituting more than 39 per cent of the global population, were fully free. When added to those nations categorised as partly free, the numbers rose to 115 nations, or more than 67 per cent of world population. For the first time, the Freedom House report pointed out that both the number of free countries and population living in free societies outnumbered both the not free countries and their population. Yet freedom's apparent surge during the last decades does not by any means guarantee its ultimate success. Chester E. Finn, Jr., remarked before a group of educators and government officials in Managua, Nicaragua in August 1991:

That people naturally prefer freedom to oppression can indeed be taken for granted. But that is not the same as saying that democratic political systems can be expected to create and maintain themselves over time. On the contrary, the idea of democracy is durable, but its practice is precarious. While the desire for freedom may be innate, the practice of democracy must be learned.⁷¹⁰

Contrary to some perceptions, a healthy democratic society is not simply an arena in which individuals pursue their own personal goals. Democracies flourish when they are tended by citizens willing to use

⁷⁰⁸Freedom House is a US based research organisation that publishes an annual survey that rates every country on its degree of political freedom and civil liberties.

⁷⁰⁹Chester E. Finn Jr., is Professor of Education and Public Policy of Vanderbilt University, and Educational

⁷¹⁰UN Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 20.

their hard won freedom to participate in the life of their society. This involves adding their voices to the public debate, electing representatives who are held accountable for their actions, and accepting the need for tolerance and compromise in public life. The citizens of a global democratic set up enjoy the right of individual freedom, but they also embrace the fundamental values of freedom and self-government.

Good Governance

Around the world, millions of citizens are demanding accountable leadership and a voice in decision-making. This has, therefore, tended to be a central focus in the governmental machinery of most countries. Democracy is inextricably linked to good governance. Good government is the process of decision making and its implementation and it is characterized globally by legitimacy, competence, rule of law, transparency, participation, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness, consensus oriented, accountability of government, respect for human rights, good governance is equally helpful, fair, gives value for money, offers information and observes standards⁷¹¹.

It should, further be stated that a good government provides security, operates according to reasonable standards of justice and provides basic public services. Democracy is more likely to be sustainable when it is held accountable by checks on its authority. For example, through competitive elections, democracies have a systematic instrument for removing ineffectual leaders and improving policies. Associations, movements and the media also monitor public officials and policies. Citizenship participation in decision making results in more effective public institutions, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for the rule of law. Democracy and good governance are mutually reinforcing when they develop together and equally, democracy and development are also mutually reinforcing when supported by good governance.

⁷¹¹Benjamin R. Barber, *Strong Democracy*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984, p. 122.

A consensus has, however, emerged that good governance is integral to achieving development goals. It attracts capital, helps economies grow, improves welfare and also pushes countries along the path toward transformational development. Effective, efficient and transparent institutions provide a strong platform for successful economic and political development. Democracy broadens social and economic opportunities and advances in economic prosperity and public wellbeing can enlarge the middle class and increase the demand for sustainable democratic governance.⁷¹² But as mentioned earlier, there is no single blue print for good government, only a set of principles which can be applied according to local circumstances.

It should be mentioned also that good governance is strongly connected to the concept of global civil society. Civil society is all these autonomous associations, groups, networks and organisations that give form and substance to community life.⁷¹³ Rather than government being the only social and political force in a community, civil society is the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), churches, private enterprise, workers associations, trade unions, community groups and countless other associations. Through these groups or associations, people articulate their needs and preference, organise to achieve their goals and popularly participate in the social, economic and cultural development of their locale. Civil society can be diverse and powerful enough to organise daily life with little outside involvement, or so weak, cowed and damaged as to be almost non-existent.

However, in many areas of the world, governments in the past tended to oppose civil society. The collapse of the communist regimes and of many repressive military dictatorships in Latin America and Asia, combined with the crisis of the welfare state in the North and of state promoted development in the South, gave rise to a much more open and complex political environment. Given the global interconnectedness of contemporary civilisation, the prevailing movement toward poverty, ecological imbalance and exclusion cannot be reversed by actions taken only at the local and national level. There

⁷¹²Ibid

⁷¹³Duke Richards, *Politics and Governance*. London, Panka Press, 2000, p. 128.

is therefore the growing realisation that neither the market nor the state alone can meet the challenges of equitable and sustainable development.

Global market mechanisms and structures of world governance can only be democratised through concerted global citizen action. This is the lesson that popular movements have learned in their long struggles to democratise government, the market and society within each country. The challenge to planetary citizenship is, therefore, to expand to the global arena the struggle for democracy and human development that has so far been carried out basically at the national level. Duke Richards, however, summarises this discussion on good governance as follows:

Good government is not an end in itself. It is a means of achieving wider goals, such as social and political development, the alleviation of poverty and protection of the environment. Good government is the essential framework within which business can flourish and provide economic prosperity, and ordinary citizens can seek to have their health, education and welfare needs met. Without good government, social, economic and political progress is difficult to achieve and impossible to guarantee.⁷¹⁴

Human Rights

Human rights issues constitute a very important dimension of political globalisation. Human rights are the rights individuals have because they are human and all human beings have them. This is, however, not a scientific proposition which some might deny. What is more important from a practical point of view is that people might disagree as to the nature of these human rights. Historically, these concepts are modern, for one hundred years ago, only a minority accepted that people of all races and both sexes had equal rights. The

⁷¹⁴David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge, University Press, 2000, p.96.

aim here is not to undertake a comprehensive survey of the human rights problem, but rather to highlight aspects concerning the universality or globalisation of human rights.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) was created and this body gave universal value to the concept of human rights for the first time. At this time, the international community of nations recognised that all members of the human family have equal, inalienable rights. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) spells this out. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set-forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.⁷¹⁵

This declaration was one of the first major achievements of the UN in the domain of human rights. It capitalised on the basic human rights such as the following:

Freedom of speech, expression and of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and association, rights to equal protection of the law, rights to due process and fair trial, rights to employment, to education, to one's own culture or nationality and to adequate standards of living.⁷¹⁶

Generally, however, people would accept that people have a right to security and some' basic level of economic well-being. There is also a general presumption that they have a right to liberty, though many argue that liberty is meaningless without some basic economic wellbeing. Liberty involves freedom of speech and thus the right to express one's opinions even if they offend people, and in particular, the government and the powerful.

It also means freedom from arbitrary arrest and the right to a fair trial and would usually include the right to participate in the choice of a

⁷¹⁵Ibid, p. 99.

⁷¹⁶UN Department of Public Information, Basic Facts About the UNO, New York, 1995, pp. 189-193.

government. However, there are some liberties which many would argue come at a very early stage in the definition of human rights such as freedom from discrimination because of race or sex.

The UNO in an attempt to combat human rights violations put in place important instruments such as the international covenants on human rights, specialised human rights treaties, commission on human rights, world conference on human rights, the high commissioner and centre for human rights.⁷¹⁷ The international covenant on human right seeks to promote and protect economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The International Bill of Rights has been further supplemented by several international legal instruments dealing with particular kinds of human rights violations such as torture and racial discrimination, or focusing on particular groups of vulnerable persons such as children and migrant workers.⁷¹⁸

The commission on human rights is responsible for submitting proposals, recommendations and investigative reports on human rights, and as such has established mechanisms to investigate human rights problems in specific countries and territories as well as on thematic situations⁷¹⁹

In 1950, the General Assembly invited all states and interested organisations to observe 10 December, the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration, as Human Rights Day, and the 20th anniversary year of the adoption in 1968, was declared the international Year for Human Rights by the General Assembly.⁷²⁰ By this declaration, human rights constitute an obligation for the members of the international community and states a common understanding of the people of the world concerning inalienable and inviolable rights.

To further develop on human rights, a centre was established aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights, to carry out research at the request of the organs concerned, and to publish and disseminate information on human rights. The centre equally services

⁷¹⁷Char les Freeman, Human Rights, London, B.T. Batsford, 1998, p. 12.

⁷¹⁸Ibid

⁷¹⁹Ibid. p. 20.

⁷²⁰Forsythe, Human Rights in International Relations, P. 3.

many human rights bodies such as the commission on human rights and the sub commission on the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities.

Therefore, the protection, promotion and violation of human rights constitute one of the most persistent sources of debate in world politics. While the preservation of certain standards in political social and economic life has long been a concern both of governmental and of non-state grouping, it was in late 1970s that the links between human rights and many other items on the national and international agendas become apparent. Genocide in Uganda and Kampuchea, starvation and the plight of refugees in many African countries, the suppression of dissidence in Eastern Europe, the people's Republic of China and Latin America, confirmed the intimate connections between ethical issues and the pursuit of influence in both national and international politics.

In late 1989, the human rights problems of East Germans, of members of the prodemocracy movement in China, of Palestinians, of Black South Africans and of the Vietnamese were prominent in the press and the political debate of a wide range of countries. Simply to list some of these instances is enough to highlight some of the complex problems to which they give rise and to uncover the uneasy relationship in world politics between normative or ethical positions and the demands of political necessity.

This discussion brings into focus the role of the non-state actors or international nongovernmental organisations in the fight against human rights violations. The most important to be mentioned here are Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Amnesty International is an international secular non-governmental organisation which defines its mission as to conduct research and generate action to prevent and end wave abuses of human rights and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated.⁷²¹ AI was founded in London in July 1961 by Peter Benenson and this body draws attention to human rights abuses and campaigns for compliance

⁷²¹Ibid

with international laws and standards.⁷²² It works to mobilise public opinion to exert pressure on governments who perpetrate abuses. Thus, AI is the human rights group whose main targets inevitably are states.

AL's vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. Therefore, in pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.⁷²³

There are however, seven major domains which Amnesty deals with: Women's rights; children's rights; ending torture; abolition of the death penalty; rights of refugees; rights of prisoners of conscience and protection of human dignity.⁷²⁴ Talking about torture in particular, David P. Forsythe writes:

Torture appears to be widespread in today's world. It is frequently part of the state controlled machinery for suppressing dissent. Concentrated in the torturers electrode or syringe is the power or responsibility of the state. However perverse the actions of individual torturers, torture itself has a rationale: isolation, humiliation, psychological pressure and physical pain are means of obtaining information, of breaking down the prisoner and of intimidating those close to him or her.⁷²⁵

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an international non-governmental organisation that conducts research and advocacy on human rights. Its headquarters in New York City and the executive director in Kenneth

⁷²²Freeman, Human Rights. p. 27.

⁷²³Ibid

⁷²⁴Ibid. p.36.

⁷²⁵Dega n Matthews, Human Rights and World Politics. New York. Evena Press, p.138.

Roth.⁷²⁶

Pursuant to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Human Rights Watch opposes violations of what it considers basic human rights, such as capital punishment and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) advocates freedoms in connection with fundamental human rights, such as freedom of religion, and the press. It produces research reports on violations of international human rights norms as set out by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and what it perceives to be other internationally accepted human rights norms.⁷²⁷

The reports are used as the basis for drawing international attention to abuses and pressuring governments and international organisations to reform. Issues raised in its report include social and gender discrimination, torture, military use of children, political corruption, abuses in criminal justice systems, the legalisation of abortion, and violations of the laws of war and international humanitarian law⁷²⁸. HRW equally supports writers that are being persecuted for their work and are thus in need of financial help.

They have globally been implicated also in campaigns concerning traffic in small arms, land mines, rights of aids patients, child labour, street children, genocide, crimes against humanity, extrajudicial killings and abductions, extraordinary rendition by the US, trafficking in women and girls and the abolition of capital punishment worldwide.⁷²⁹

To conclude on these two aforementioned international NGOs, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, it should be stated that they are the only two western-oriented international human rights organisations operating worldwide in most situations of severe oppression or abuse. As close allies, the two groups play complementary roles, reflecting division of labour the major differences lie in the groups' structure and methods of promoting change. ‘

⁷²⁶Ibid

⁷²⁷Ibid, p. 139.

⁷²⁸Ibid

⁷²⁹A. Watson, *Diplomacy*, London, Longman, 1988, p. 93.

Diplomacy and Globalisation

Diplomacy is the management of a country's affairs by its agents abroad, that is, the ambassadors and ministers, and their direction by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at home.⁷³⁰ Diplomacy is also regarded 'as a technique employed by governments and diplomatic services, which constitute a major component of national administrative structures.'⁷³¹

It employs techniques which are also used by other actors. So, rather than assuming that this is a preserve of states, it is useful to distinguish between official diplomacy, which is diplomacy engaged in by governments, and unofficial diplomacy, which is diplomacy undertaken by the Non-State Actors (NSA): It is important to remember that these are not watertight categories for governments to interact with NSAs just as NSAs communicate and negotiate with governments. Therefore, diplomacy is a fundamental feature of the state system, and by developing channels of communication, seeks the attainment of goals by means of compromise, persuasion, conciliation and negotiation.⁷³²

Diplomatic relations between states may be established by friendly contacts of any form between their governments, but permanent diplomatic relations are considered to exist only with the establishment of a diplomatic mission, or with the exchange of diplomatic missions. These are established by mutual consent and on the basis of a mutual understanding of the functions that will be undertaken by the mission. These functions have become generally accepted over past centuries and have been defined in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations as consisting basically of:

First representing the sending state; second, protecting in the receiving state the interests of the sending state and its nationals,

⁷³⁰Ibid

⁷³¹Ibid, p.95.

⁷³²D. G. Hitchener and W. H. Harbold, *Modern Government*, New York, Dudd and Mead, 1990, p. 64.

within the limits permitted by international law; thirdly, negotiating with the government of the receiving state; fourthly, ascertaining by all lawful means, conditions and developments in the receiving state, and reporting there on to the government of the sending state; and lastly; promoting friendly relations between the sending state and the receiving state, and developing their economic, cultural and scientific relations.

Diplomatic globalisation is closely linked to the concept of foreign policy. The term foreign policy describes the attitudes, courses of action, and objectives that a state's government adopts in its relations toward other states and areas abroad⁷³³. According to Hitchenner and Harbold, foreign policy is the process whereby a state adjusts its actions to those of other states so as to minimise adverse actions and maximise the favourable actions of foreign states.⁷³⁴ They further describe foreign policy as a combination of aims and interests pursued and defended by the given state and its ruling class in its relations with other states, and the methods and means used by it for the achievement and defence of these purposes and interests.⁷³⁵ Meanwhile, A.Watson, looks at foreign policy as a process by which states identify goals in the international system and puts into place actions designed to achieve these goals.⁷³⁶

The aims and interests of a state in international relations are realised by various methods and means: first, by peaceful official relations which is maintained by a government, through its special agencies, together with the corresponding agencies of other states, second; by economic, political, scientific and ideological influence on other states, and lastly, by utilising the armed forces through war or other methods of armed coercion. Therefore, the objectives and interest that a state seeks to promote or safeguard as it interacts with other states, should be viewed against the background of its internal

⁷³³Ibid

⁷³⁴Ibid, p. 69.

⁷³⁵Watson, Diplomacy, p. 110

⁷³⁶Ibid

social structure and the configuration of political power within it. A. Watson, however, holds that, the class that controls and welds state power necessarily shapes foreign policy and does so in accordance with its own class interest, even though these might be rationalised ideologically as the interest of the nation as a whole.⁷³⁷

This brings into play the notion of the main determinants of foreign policy. It concern national interest, capabilities of the state and international circumstances. 'The basic determinant of a states' foreign policy is commonly found in the objective to promote the national interest, which is generally considered to embrace the states security and welfare.'⁷³⁸

Security may be sought in terms of a superiority of armaments to repel or deter attack from any other state. Yet this very superiority may appear menacing to other states, constituting aggressive behaviour in their eyes, and may induce them to take reciprocal action. As Mary Edwards has noted:

States have several means available for the promotion of their national interest abroad. It can be done through diplomacy, imperialism, war, political warfare and international organisations. What choice they make is dependent, firstly, on the measures of national power they possess, and secondly, on the foreign policy objectives they adopt.⁷³⁹

The capabilities of the state concern the major factors which allow the state to act and exert power and influence in the international community. These characteristics which are both tangible and intangible clearly condition what a state undertakes in its relations with other states. Barston writes: The capabilities of the state include the power factor, factor nationalism, geographic factor, population,

⁷³⁷Hitchener Harbold, *Modern Government*, p. 79.

⁷³⁸Mary Edwards, *Diplomacy in the 20th Century*, California, Deby Press, 1999, p. 132.

⁷³⁹R. P. Barston, *Modern Diplomacy*, London, Longman, 1988, p. 89.

economy and the military factor.⁷⁴⁰

Power in international politics describes the capacity of the state to exert strength authority or influence. The concept of nationalism acts to induce people to give their highest loyalty to the nation-state, to submerge their personal interest into those of the nation, and to

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Solidarity beyond Borders: Africa's Respond to the Haiti Earthquake

By
Walters Samah

Abstract

On 12 January 2010 an earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale hit Haiti⁷⁴¹, killing an estimated 300,000 people, injuring about the same number and leaving up to 1.5 million homeless. As the Western media screened images of the unfolding disaster, it was clear that the world was about to experience one of its worst ever natural catastrophes. This sparked a scramble by the international community to come to the rescue of the poor island nation. In a rare and spectacular display of solidarity, African countries forgot about their own development challenges and joined international efforts in providing assistance to Haiti. Extending a helping hand beyond borders and far across the Atlantic Ocean, Africa's support to Haiti went beyond just providing assistance for emergency relief efforts to longer-term reconstruction. Never before had Africa demonstrated such extraordinary solidarity towards a country in crisis, not even when it concerned a fellow African country. This article gives an overview of Africa's response to the Haiti earthquake with emphasis on Senegal. It argues the motivations that underlie African assistance towards Haiti went far beyond the sense of a shared humanity.

Keywords: Earthquake, Repatriation, Border, Solidarity, Humanitarian assistance, Reconstruction.

⁷⁴¹In 2009 it ranked 149 out of 182 countries on the Human Development Index.

Résumé

Le 12 janvier 2010 un séisme de magnitude 7.3 sur l'échelle de Richter frappa Haïti, tuant environ 300,000 personnes, presque autant de blessés et laissant jusqu'à 1.5 millions de sans-abris. Pendant que les médias occidentaux montraient les images de la catastrophe en direct, il était clair que le monde était en train de connaître l'une des pires catastrophes naturelles jamais connues. Cela a suscité une mobilisation de la communauté internationale pour venir au secours de cette île pauvre. Dans une solidarité rare et spectaculaire, les pays africains ont oublié leurs propres problèmes de développement et se sont joints aux efforts internationaux pour octroyer l'aide humanitaire pour Haïti. En donnant une main d'aide au-delà des frontières et loin à travers l'océan Atlantique, le soutien de l'Afrique en Haïti est allé au-delà des efforts d'aide d'urgence à la reconstruction à long terme. Jamais auparavant l'Afrique n'avait démontré une telle solidarité envers un pays en crise, pas même lorsque cela concernait un pays africain. Cet article donne un aperçu de la réponse africaine face au séisme d'Haïti avec un accent particulier sur le Sénégal. Il démontre que la motivation africaine pour aider Haïti est allée bien au-delà d'une humanité part âgée.

Mots clés: séisme, rapatriement, frontière, solidarité, assistance humanitaire, reconstruction.

Background and Context

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Haiti, then called Saint Domingue, was a French colony. Given its wealth, it was considered as France's richest colony, earning it the nickname the Pearl of the Antilles. In 1804 Haiti achieved independence following a successful slave revolt and so emerged as the second independent nation in the Americas after the United States. The Haitian Revolution brought about two things; the abolition of racial slavery and the establishment of a black independent republic. By virtue of this fact, Haiti became a symbol of liberty and resistance against oppression and a model for other peoples under colonial rule. Granted its rich history, UNESCO

at the 60th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in August 2008 advocated the classification of Haiti as World heritage.

Classed as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti is clearly amongst the most impoverished on earth, with levels of poverty comparable only to those of Somalia and Afghanistan.⁷⁴² At the end of 2010, the *Jane's Intelligence Review*⁷⁴³ placed Haiti after Somalia and the most unstable countries in the world.⁷⁴³ With an economy highly dependent on imports, about 76 per cent of Haitian population, estimated at about 9 million, lives on less than US\$2 and 56 per cent on less than US\$1 per day. Haiti's problems are due to a combination of factors, such as misguided international development policies, foreign domination, political instability, and self-inflicted crisis of mismanagement, corruption, racism and dictatorships as well as natural disasters.⁷⁴⁴

The foregoing description of the country suggests that there was already a dire situation in Haiti before the 12 January earthquake. When the quake struck, it unleashed a humanitarian disaster that brought the country to its knees. The situation was quite tragic because the quake hit Port-au-Prince, the national capital that accounts for more than 65 per cent of the country's economic activity and 85 per cent of its tax revenue. A Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) carried out by a joint team of national and international experts revealed some astonishing figures. The overall damage and losses caused by the earthquake were estimated to be US\$ billion, which is

⁷⁴²See *Jane's Country Stability Ratings for 2010* released on 14 December 2010

⁷⁴³Situated along the corridor of hurricanes and tropical storms and lying on the fault line of earthquake the country is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. According to UNICEF, only half of children of school going age are able to go to school, majority of which would not complete primary school.

⁷⁴⁴Government of Republic of Haiti, *The Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti*, March 2010

over 120 per cent of the country's GDP.⁷⁴⁵ What was at stake here was not only the survival of a people but also that of a state, whose institutions (ministries, presidency parliament, justice, police etc.) were decapitated by the earthquake. Consequently, international intervention was absolutely needed to keep both the Haitian state and people alive. It is against this backdrop that one examines Africa's response to the Haiti earthquake, which had as part of its aid package, an offer to resettle Haitians in Africa.

Africa's Response to the Haiti Earthquake

When the media projected images of untold suffering in Haiti caused by the quake, there was an outpouring of solidarity all over the world, including Africa. Not wanting to be left out in the scramble to provide international assistance to Haiti, African countries forgot about their own poverty and financial difficulties and displayed a rare solidarity with the people of Haiti. In fact, the Haiti earthquake galvanized the African continent like nothing else had ever done before, not even when it concerned a fellow African state. This article focuses on the humanitarian response by national governments and does not take into account what could be classified as citizen response, which may include donations from NGOs, religious organizations and individuals.

Ahead of the 14th Ordinary Summit of the African Union scheduled for 31 January -02 February 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Dr Jean Ping, AU Commission Chairperson called for strong African solidarity with the people of Haiti. He also sent a letter to all the Member States appealing for donations.⁷⁴⁶ On 31 January, during his opening address at the summit, the AU Commission Chairperson announced the creation of a special account with the African Development Bank to collect funds from the African countries.

⁷⁴⁵Allocution d'Ouverture du Dr Jean PING, Président de la Commission de l'Union Africaine, 14^e Session Ordinaire de la Conférence de L'union Africain, Addis Ababa, 31 Janvier 2010

⁷⁴⁶Haiti is a corridor of hurricanes, tropical storms and earthquakes.

According to Dr Ping, Haiti's history as the world's first black republic, creates a special obligation for AU members. He went further to describe Haiti's earthquake as a tragedy that "transcends borders". African countries responded massively to the call by pledging support to Haiti. Though attention at the time was paid to the millions of US dollars pledged by Western nations, Africa's aid pledges were quite meaningful, especially given that most of them are receivers of foreign aid themselves.

The Case of Senegal

The way Senegal mobilized itself and the rest of the continent to help Haiti was quite remarkable. On 17 January, barely five days after the quake, President Abdoulaye Wade proposed the idea of a new Haitian homeland in Africa. In addition, his government pledged FCFA 250 million as financial aid and launched a National Solidarity Week in schools dubbed 'one student, one teacher, one gesture', aimed at collecting money to help Haitian children. But of all the aid promised by Senegal, the one that drew the world's attention was the offer to provide land to resettle Haitian victims

The Back-to-Africa Resettlement Plan

According to Wade, the history of enslavement of Africans in Haiti entitled their descendants the right to return to Africa, their original land. This he considers was the most durable solution, given that Haiti is constantly undergoing natural calamities?⁷⁴⁷ To march action with words, he offered to provide land in Senegal to resettle Haitians who had been displaced by the earthquake and urged other African governments to naturalize Haitians seeking a new nationality in Africa. Details of the resettlement plan were provided by President Wade's spokesperson, Mamadou Bemba Ndiaye, when he stated: "The president is offering voluntary repatriation to any Haitian that wants to return to their origin Senegal is ready to offer them parcels of land -

⁷⁴⁷The Associated Press, 16 January 2010; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8463921.stm>.

even an entire region. It all depends on how many Haitians come. If it's just a few individuals, then we will likely offer them housing or small pieces of land. If they come en masse we are ready to give them a region...⁷⁴⁸

Sceptics and critics of Wade initially dismissed the plan considering it was just another bluff or what some have called *waderism*. There was added reason for this scepticism given that there were no concrete details on how Senegal intended to translate its promises into reality. That notwithstanding, Wade, in pursuit of his repatriation plan, began taking steps that showed that he was to be taken seriously. In this regard, shortly after the announcement of the resettlement proposal, parliament approved a resolution committing Senegalese to welcome Haitians wishing to resettle in Senegal.

Furthermore, President Wade tried to sell his idea of free land to Haiti's earthquake victims to other African leaders. He convinced the AU to consider the proposal during its annual summit that held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia that started on 31 January 2010. However, by this time he had expanded the resettlement idea to a resolution on creating a separate, independent state on the continent for repatriated Haitian refugees.⁷⁴⁹ It should be recalled that the proposal for a new state was reminiscent of the establishment of Sierra Leone as a homeland for former slaves by the British in 1787, and Liberia by America in 1821/1847.

While presenting Wade's proposal at the Addis Ababa summit, Dr Jean Ping, AU Commission Chairperson, stated that, it was out of a "sense of duty of memory and solidarity" that the AU was furthering the proposal to "create in Africa the conditions for the return of Haitians"⁷⁵⁰ But as interesting as the idea might have seemed, it was clearly an ambitious one. As such, it raised questions as to whether

⁷⁴⁸Le Soleil, 16 January 2010

⁷⁴⁹Allocution d'Ouverture du Dr Jean PING. Président de la Commission de l'Union Africaine, 14^e Session Ordinaire de la Conférence de L'Union Africain. Addis Ababa. 31 Janvier 2010

⁷⁵⁰Evidently, most African countries are recipients of foreign aid themselves. Senegal for instance which originally introduced the idea is not much better than Haiti.

African countries have the necessary resources to support a large influx of Haitian refugees, and also whether they would be willing to give up territory for a new state.⁷⁵¹ Though there was no official commitment by the AU to create a new state in Africa for Haitians, the Senegalese initiative influenced the continental body to approve a resolution urging African countries to show solidarity with the Haitian people, which led to donations by African states for the Haiti relief efforts.

From Addis Ababa, President Wade continued to push ahead his resettlement plan. In May 2010, he sent a high profile delegation to Haiti led by Dr Amadou Lamine Ba, Minister of International and Humanitarian Affairs. During a press conference held in Port-au-Prince on 5 May 2010, Dr Lamine Ba confirmed the Senegalese proposal to make available land for the resettlement of Haitians willing to emigrate. He declared:

We are here to see how we can accompany the government of Haiti during these crucial times for the people for Haiti and also to confirm the vibrant call made by President Wade following the violent earthquake of 12 January, for the return of Haitians to Africa, by providing land to these descendants of slaves deported from Africa (my translation).⁷⁵²

He also revealed that over 1000 Haitians had already applied to immigrate to Senegal, of which hundreds would be repatriated by mid-2010. He further informed that a committee had been established to secure suitable land to resettle Haitians: emphasizing that priority was to be given to students. In addition, Minister Lamine Ba stated that besides repatriation, the Senegalese government intended to help Haiti reconstruct schools and health centres. According to him, considering Haiti's exemplary contribution for the fight for human dignity it is a 'duty of memory' (*devoir de memoires*) for Africa to come to the aid of

⁷⁵¹Le Nouvelliste, 6 May 2010.

⁷⁵²Most scientists believe that Haiti is hardly out of the seismic attack - and are convinced than ever that Haitians can expect another major quake sooner rather than later. See, for example, TIME, 19 November 2010.

Haiti.

Reactions by Haitians to the Resettlement offer

The proposal by President Wade to offer land in Senegal for the resettlement of Haitian victims came at a time when many earthquake survivors had concluded that Haiti was no longer habitable. This was especially so given the repeated tremors and aftershocks that followed the quake and the continued spread of information relating to the imminence of another quake of even greater magnitude.⁷⁵³ Put differently, Wade's repatriation offer came at a time many Haitians were looking for ways and means to leave the country irrespective of the destination and never to return. The desire by Haitians to leave their country could best be appreciated through the words of an earthquake survivor who declared that: *"ma maison cesse, lycee cesse, eglise cesse, ma vie aussi cesse, je pars ..."*⁷⁵⁴

Hence, throughout 2010, there were reports almost every week of repatriations or deportation of Haitians from the Bahamas, USA, Cuba, Jamaica, Virgins Islands, St Martin's and the Dominican Republic. For example, in January 2010, US Coast Guards intercepted and returned a boat with 300 Haitians. Reporting on this incident, the New York Times quoted one James Previlus, a 22 year old returnee, as saying: "I'd go anywhere and I'd forget about Haiti I'd never come back?"⁷⁵⁵ Many took the risk of climbing aboard small sailboats setting sail at midnight for neighbouring countries, some of which capsized and caused loss of lives.

Understandably, when the local press in Haiti broke the news of the repatriation offer, it generated much interest among Haitians, many of whom expressed the desire to relocate to the West African state. But as the press did not provide details of the plan, interest in the proposed repatriation project began to dwindle. However, the visit in

⁷⁵³Cite d by Dr Jean PING, AU Commission Chairperson in his Speech at the 4th Ordinary Session of AU Summit, Addis Ababa, 31 January 2010

⁷⁵⁴The New York Times, 8 July 2010.

⁷⁵⁵Le Soleil, 14 Octobre 2010

May 2010 of Dr Amadou Lamine Ba, Senegalese Minister for International and Humanitarian Affairs, led to renewed interest and high expectations by Haitians.

Following that visit, the Senegalese Formed Police Unit (FPU) working with UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was mandated by their government to register candidates. On 7 May 2010, a colleague filed a report describing the situation in one of Haiti's regional headquarters, Les Cayes, in which he noted that:

On a daily basis Haitians flocked to the Senegalese FPU to register for repatriation to the "homeland". Thus far, according to the Senegalese FPU, 10 000 Haitians have registered, some come from outside the region as far as Port au Prince. There are no criteria for registration, old people, illiterate people; students are registering en masse.... I am not sure the Senegalese government will be able to accommodate all these people who are looking for greener pastures.... Every day the scene in front of the Senegalese FPU HQ reminds me of the queues at the US embassy in the aftermath of the earthquake. Some people come early and stand in line at 4 am.... The rumour is rife that after the world cup "in their minds hosted by Senegal", a huge boat will come to the shores of Haiti to take 10000 Haitians to the Promised Land.

But not all Haitians were impressed with the idea of repatriating Haitians to Africa. It could well be argued that Haitians may be very poor yet they are very proud of their history. Though conscious of their African descent, they generally do not see their kinship with Africans. This ambivalence toward Africa makes them to be less inclined to identify themselves with the Black Continent.

Reacting to an article published on 6 February 2010 by the *Kenya Star*, titled "AU calls for naturalization of Haitians seeking to return to Africa" a number of Haitians expressed their disapproval of the plan. One reacted by saying that: We fought for our independence since 1804 to have a country. Not all Haiti is destroyed we must rebuild. I love my country and proud to be Haitian of African descent'. Another Haitian opposed to the repatriation proposal explained: "Our fathers

had given everything for that land, their dignity, their blood, their life. This is our land. If we were able to survive 300 years of slavery, we shall overcome poverty. We just want a helping hand”.

On its part, there was no official reaction to the plan by the Haitian government. However, when asked about the repatriation proposal, the Haitian Minister of Communication, Marie Laurence Jocelyn-Lassegue, stated: “We are very happy about this solidarity from Senegal and Africa as a whole and we will like to have something... an invitation from Senegal ... “Meanwhile, as Haiti was transitioning from emergency relief needs to reconstruction, it became obvious that Senegalese proposal for the resettlement of Haitians in Africa was too ambitious. This added to criticisms at home, must have influenced President Wade to review his proposal and to embark on the longer-term reconstruction of Haiti by investing in Haiti’s human capital.

Award of Scholarships to Haitians Students

The earthquake is reported to have destroyed over 1.300 educational institutions (representing 75 per cent of the schools and 95 per cent of state universities) and killed as many as 400 teachers and 5000 students. Hence, the decision by Senegal to grant full scholarship to Haitians students to study in Senegal was welcome by the Haitian government and people. By: offering these scholarships, the Senegalese authorities hoped that upon completing their; training, the Haitian students, by virtue of their professional skills, would play a role in the reconstruction of Haiti. It was also hoped that while studying in Senegal, they would learn the African culture so as to serve in future as a bridge between Africa and Haiti.

On 12 October 2010, the first batch of Haitians students left for Senegal aboard a chartered flight sent by President Wade. It comprised of 163 students chosen from a total 3000’ applicants. At the farewell ceremony in Port au Prince, Minister Lamine Ba assured students and their parents of Senegalese hospitality when he stated: “The students will be treated as though they were at home and they will be offered

free health and social coverage?⁷⁵⁶ Speaking on behalf of the Haitian government, Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive expressed gratitude to the Senegalese government and called on the students to take full advantage of the offer. As he puts it:

We have accepted grants from other countries like the United States and Canada, but the way that Senegal has granted these grants is historical. The students will not make the trip of shame, but *refondation*. I am happy that you are going to Africa to know it culture better and have another perspective of this continent, contrary to prejudice given by some media. It is necessary to study and come back home to transmit your knowledge and to participate in the reconstruction of the country ... You will be in your fatherland and this country will make you proud of your Haitian identity (my translation).⁷⁵⁷

On 13 October 2010, the students arrived in Dakar. The event was of historical and symbolical importance to both Haiti and Senegal. Comparing the students' journey with the Middle Passage experience of their slave ancestors centuries ago, one Senegalese newspaper wrote: 'The.... Haitian students are experiencing another crossing of Atlantic Ocean. An air strip very different from the tragic maritime Odyssey lived for centuries by their forefathers.... They were stacked up in boats, beaten and the recalcitrant ones were thrown into the ocean to end their life tragically, devoured by the sharks'.⁷⁵⁸ On the 17 October 2010 the *Haitian Internet Newsletter* published an article stating:

Out of a world where many neighbours of Haiti are pushing Haitians away, treating us like dogs, and constantly making headlines about how many of us they have kicked out, comes SENEGAL, a little African country, not any better than Haiti, who flew halfway around the world, picked us up like dignitaries,

⁷⁵⁶Le Soleil, 14 Octobre 2010

⁷⁵⁷Le Soleil, 14 October 2010

⁷⁵⁸Ibid

received us like diplomats, only to help us (my translation).

In Senegal, thousands of people took part in the state ceremony organized to receive the Haitian students. The ceremony, broadcast live in seven African countries, was presided over by President Wade and attended by the President of Guinea-Bissau and the Prime Minister of Niger. Even the ceremony ground itself carried with it a lot of symbolism. It was the Place de la Renaissance with its imposing \$27 million monument symbolizing Africa's renaissance.

According to President Wade the 'return' of Haitians students to Senegal was a triumphal victory for Africa. As he put it:

Africa has defeated the forces of evil. This 13 October 2010 marks the return of the Haitians to the land of their forefathers, which is brilliant victory for Africa, a victory for the Black people.... Your arrival is the expression of the strength of the Pan-Africanist spirit that started long before the Haitian revolution (my translation)⁷⁵⁹.

Addressing the Haitian students he told them:

Your ancestors left here by physical force.... You have returned through moral force ... When the slaves embarked on the ships, this is the last piece of African earth they saw.... it is on this point of land that sticks out farthest into the Atlantic that we have chosen to receive you.... You are neither strangers nor refugees. You are members of our family⁷⁶⁰.

To ensure the Haitian students were given adequate attention, President Wade called on his fellow Senegalese to be generous to them and instructed the Minister to provide regular periodic reports on their social and academic integration in Senegal.

On the 15 of October the Haitian students were taken to Gorse

⁷⁵⁹Associated Press (Online), October 14,2010; Walfadji 14 October 2010

⁷⁶⁰<http://www.haitilibre.co>

Island, off the coast of Dakar, a major slave-trading centre between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. In what symbolized the return of African slave descendants to their homeland, some of the students were put in a boat that sailed back through the “door of no return” which their slave forefathers passed through before taking off to the New World.

With the welcome formalities over, the Haitian students were admitted into the different state universities in Dakar, Saint-Louis and Thies, where they were accorded the same privileges as Senegalese with entitlement to free lodging and bursaries. It did not take long for the Haitian students to attest to Senegalese hospitality. On 24 December, during a banquet offered by Cardinal Theodore Adrien Sarr, the spokesperson of the Haitian students, Pierre Marie Michelle Chimene, stated:

We are moved by all the sacrifices of the Senegalese people to make us feel at home, that we are not on foreign soil. You continue to consider us to be your daughters and sons ... that, in spite of its limited means, Senegal wants to share with us. This brings honour to this country which has administered a great lesson of solidarity to the whole world (my translation).⁷⁶¹

Critics, however, questioned why Senegal, whose university system is facing enormous difficulties would engage in such a costly project.⁷⁶² However, others argued that the lesson Senegal wanted to show the rest of the world was that one does not need to be rich to offer assistance to a suffering neighbour. According to Iba Der Thiam, historian and Vice President of the National Assembly, “We are giving the rest of the world a lesson in humanity. Senegal has shown that it’s

ERLINK "<http://www.haitilibre.co>"<http://www.haitilibre.co>

⁷⁶¹<http://www.leguotidlen.sn> access, 14 Nov 2010.

ERLINK "<http://www.leguotidien.sn>"<http://www.leguotidien.sn> access, 14 Nov 2010.

⁷⁶²Associated Press, 14 October 2010. In 2009, Senegal was rated 166 out of 177 on the UN’s Human Development Index, while Haiti was 149, 17 places higher

in the hearts of the poor that you can find the gift of generosity ... A country that is neither rich nor developed has agreed to share the little it has with its brothers.⁷⁶³ But the Senegalese gesture towards Haiti can also be seen as a lesson of pan-African solidarity.

The decision by the Senegalese government to grant full scholarships to Haitian students to study in Africa was followed few months after by Benin which offered 100 scholarships and Rwanda which offered 5 scholarships. This is to say that though Senegal is the main focus of this chapter, it was not the only African country that provided aid to Haiti following the 12 January 2010 earthquake. As noted earlier, almost every African country made a contribution though only few would be mentioned here. According to *Africa Renewal*, by the end of March 2010, some 24 countries in Africa had either donated or pledged aid for the Haitian relief effort.⁷⁶⁴

In support of Haiti, the South African government pledged US\$135,000 for the relief effort and embarked on a three-phase assistance package that consisted of deployment of a medical and rescue team, deployment of forensic pathologists to help identify bodies and provision of humanitarian aid in partnership with South African NGOs. Nigeria, which prior to the quake had a 121-strong police contingent serving with the UN Mission in Haiti, announced it would provide an unspecified amount of financial aid towards the earthquake relief effort and a House Representatives numbering 360 approved a resolution to contribute N20, 000 (about US\$130) each for the same purpose. Even war torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) which receive billions of dollars in foreign aid pledged some US\$ 2.5 million to Haiti.⁷⁶⁵ Other major contributors in Africa were Morocco which pledged some US\$34 million; Ghana with a pledge of US\$3 million and Equatorial Guinea which pledged US\$2 million. Not insignificantly, Namibia, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo each pledged US\$1 million, while Liberia and Chad each donated \$50,000.

⁷⁶³*Africa Renewal*, April 2010, p. 22

⁷⁶⁴The announcement of the aid package to faraway Haiti sparked demonstrations in Kinshasa, forcing the government to defend its decision.

⁷⁶⁵*Sunday Times* (Rwanda), 10 December 2010

On her part, Rwanda after making a financial contribution of US\$100,000 and granting full scholarship to 5 Haitian students who are currently studying in the National University of Rwanda, promised to support capacity building in decentralization.⁷⁶⁶ To facilitate cooperation between the two countries a Haiti-Rwanda Commission was created. Besides, Rwanda sent a contingent of 200 police officers under the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to assist in providing security. Given its successful experience in dealing with post-war reconstruction and its similarities with Haiti, Rwanda is often cited as a model Haiti could follow.⁷⁶⁷ Understandably, President Kagame was invited to address the 2 June 2010 World Summit for the Future of Haiti that took place in Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic, where he was expected to share Rwanda's post genocide experience, particularly reconstruction in the absence of proper state structures.⁷⁶⁸ But what really justifies this vast mobilization and quick response by Africa to help Africa?

Explaining Africa's Motivation to help

In reaction to the aid packages donated by African governments some critics wondered whether the funds could not have been better used at home. However, a number of reasons could explain the willingness of African countries to assist Haiti following the disaster. Though, like most of the world, they were motivated by a sense 'of shared humanity, race was undoubtedly a factor.

Considering that *Haiti* was founded by slaves of *Black-African*

⁷⁶⁶In October 2009, three months before the quake, while serving as parliamentary support and liaison officer for the UN Mission in Haiti, I helped facilitate a working visit of members of Haitian parliament to Rwanda.

⁷⁶⁷Scheduled to address the summit, President Kagame however did not attend.

⁷⁶⁸John K. Thornton observes that a significant number of the slaves originated from the lower Guinea coast and the coastal area of Angola; see John K. Thornton, "African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 25: (1&2. 1991), p. 74.

origin⁷⁶⁹ for many Africans, the relationship with Haitians is that of brotherhood, the Black/African brotherhood. To show this' fraternity between Haiti and Africa, on 12 October 2010, during an official visit to Haiti's capital Port au Prince, Amadou Lamine Ba, Senegalese Minister of International and Humanitarian Affairs, declared: "The earth trembled in Haiti on 12 January 2010. In the Senegal, hearts trembled. Haiti is a part of the Senegalese" (my translation).⁷⁷⁰

In fact, the historical significance of Haiti to Africa cannot be overstated, as both share some historical parallels. In the 19th century when almost all of Africa was undergoing colonial penetration and eventual rule, Haiti was already a black, independent republic. When a century after African colonies took their own steps to independence from Europe, they found inspiration and unity with their Caribbean brothers. Many Africans therefore see Haiti as the country that set the example for their own liberation.

Some scholars have even argued that Haiti played a far greater role in the cultural and political emancipation of Africa than historians previously credited. Quoting a Haitian commentator, Marguerite Laurent, 'Haitian blood ... paved the way for African dignity and survival'.⁷⁷¹ Even after the 1960s, some Haitians travelled to newly independent African states such as Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Ethiopia to settle there, and share their skills and knowledge. Understandably, at the 14th Ordinary Session of the AU in Addis Ababa, Dr Jean Ping, AU Commission Chairperson explained that the tragedy in Haiti was of particular concern for Africa. Citing him:

As their original homeland, the Haitian tragedy is of primary concern to Africa, taking into account the blood links which attach us and these people, and considering what we owe Haiti, the first

⁷⁶⁹Le Soleil, 14 October 2010

⁷⁷⁰Marguerite Laurent, "How Haiti's Sacrifice is Uniting the African Union, CARICOM and the World"

⁷⁷¹Allocution d'Ouverture du Dr Jean PING, Président de la Commission de l'Union Africaine, 14^e Session Ordinaire de la Conférence de L'Union Africain, Addis Ababa, 31 Janvier 2010

Black Republic in 1804 and the torchbearer for the liberation of the black people.... How then could we as Africans remain indifferent to Haiti's fate and the profound despair of its people... ?⁷⁷² (My translation)

Aware of this reality, Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary-General, while addressing African leaders in Addis Ababa, declared that: "The nation of Haiti is an ocean away, yet I know it is close to every African heart. Haiti's history and culture are deeply rooted in Africa"⁷⁷³. These amongst others, justify Africa's motivation and mobilization to help Haiti. But could this mark a turning point in the relations between Africa and Haiti?

"An African country outside of Africa": The Case for Strengthening Africa-Haiti Cooperation

Throughout the past decades, diplomatic ties between Haiti and African countries have been very limited. This in spite of the fact that Haiti's former dictator, Francois Duvalier, belonged to a group of Haitian intellectuals, called the Griot, who believed that Haiti needed to revert to its African heritage in order to reclaim its authenticity and chart the course of its development. Prior to the quake, contacts were limited to few countries such as South Africa, Benin, Ivory Coast, but only Benin had an Embassy, with exchange of Ambassadors and Ivory Coast with a Consular Office. Not even South Africa which' had very close ties with the former President, Jean Bertrand Aristide, had a diplomatic representation in Haiti. Benin's close ties with Haiti can be justified by the fact that it is considered the original ancestral land of Haitians⁷⁷⁴. Besides, it is the motherland of Voodoo, a popular official

⁷⁷²UN Secretary General's Remarks to the Summit of the AU, Addis Ababa, 31 January 2010

⁷⁷³As the ancestors of Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) have been traced in Benin, Haitians believed they are descendants of the people of Benin/Dahomey.

⁷⁷⁴See for example, République d'Haiti, Livre Blanc du Gouvernement de Transition, 9 Mars 2004- 9 juin 2 Pf.333-370,

religion in Haiti.

In spite of not placing great importance on her relation with Africa, Haiti has often rushed to Africa when it sought for help and could not find elsewhere. For example, to pre-empt fuel shortages ahead of the 2006 general elections, the transitional government of Haiti, used the services of its roving ambassador for Africa to secure the signing of Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the provision of 527,203 barrels of oil/gas for US\$ 10.000.000.00.⁷⁷⁵ Similarly, by the end of 2003, Haiti needed African backing to make its \$21.7-billion restitution claim from France for what has come to be known as the; independence debt.⁷⁷⁶ As France shunned the request, the Haiti Foreign Minister, Joseph Philippe Antonio, made a number of trips to Africa in a bid to lobby for the support of African countries. During a visit to South Africa, Minister Antonio declared: “We do not expect any of our African friends to side against France and hurt their relations with that country. We are only asking for their understanding and for them to use their influence to facilitate our dialogue with France”⁷⁷⁷.

This notwithstanding, in the early 2000s, Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Jean-Baptiste Aristide were part of an effort to revive relations between Africa and the Caribbean region. In July 2003, President Mbeki attended the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Summit and in January 2004 he took part in the bicentenary of Haiti’s independence. But this endeavour did not last for long due to Aristide’s resignation⁷⁷⁸ as President on 29 February 2004.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Mbeki and Aristide had brought closer the AU and CARICOM. Hence, joint efforts by the two regional bodies led to South Africa granting asylum to Aristide. Also, with the

⁷⁷⁵Haiti was forced to pay about USD 20 billion worth of gold in 1804 as reparation to France in exchange for recognition of her independence, an amount they finished paying only in 1947.

⁷⁷⁶Uganda Net (online) of 24 October 2003

⁷⁷⁷The term resignation is used here although other sources argue he was overthrown by a US-French led coup.

⁷⁷⁸Caribbean Netnews/AFP (online) Updated 31 Jan 3 2005

political crisis that ensued, the AU played a role in resolving the crisis by supporting CARICOM and the United Nations to bring about a democratic transition in Haiti in 2006. In justifying AU's involvement in the political crisis in Haiti, the then Commission Chairperson, Alpha Oumar Konare, argued that "Haiti is an African country outside of Africa."⁷⁷⁹ In the light of the above, it is in the interest of Haiti to improve cooperation ties with Africa. This is particularly true if one considers that Haiti has more in common with Africa than with its Caribbean or Latin American neighbours.

In fact, given the prevalent state failure and social crisis in Haiti, aspects it could learn from Africa may include: the African concept of family, kinship, communal living and chieftaincy. Haiti could also count on Africa to defend its interest on the global stage such as in multi-lateral organization like the UN, where Africa has a strong representation. As shall be seen below, there is evidence that in the past, Haiti has lobbied African countries too in times of need.

Greater cooperation with Africa may be realized through Haiti gaining membership of the African Union. On 24 August 2010, at the end of a conference on the Haitian Revolution and the Universality of Human Rights, UNESCO urged the government of Haiti to include the teaching of African History on the school curriculum⁷⁸⁰ and recommended that Haiti should seek membership of the African Union in spite of being located geographically far from Africa.⁷⁸¹

However, the idea to integrate Haiti into the African Union is not new. In October 2003, during a visit to South Africa, Haitian Foreign Minister, Antonio revealed that Haiti was in the process of seeking observer status at the Africa Union. He added that: "One day we might even become [members] of the AU. We are, after all members of the African Diaspora.... We have more in common with Africa than with Latin America."⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁹Though much of Haitian history is taught in African and Cameroonian universities, African history is largely ignored in Haitians schools.

⁷⁸⁰This was at the end on a conference held in Haiti from 21-23 August 2009.

⁷⁸¹Ugan daNet (online) of 24 October 2003

⁷⁸²A.Ne

Conclusion

Beset with their own problems and far from pursuing national interests, African countries proactively committed themselves to helping Haiti after it was struck and ruined by the devastating earthquake of 12 January 2010. Driven by a sense of shared humanity and by the spirit of African/Black brotherhood, rooted in Pan-Africanism, African governments donated generously towards the emergency relief effort in Haiti. With the goal of helping Haiti rebuild better from the quake, they also offered possibilities for training and capacity building. The proposal by Senegal to provide land in Africa to resettle Haitian earthquake victims and the acceptance by the African Union to consider such an option is indicative of the willingness by Africa to help Haiti. If anything, the Haitian earthquake and its resulting disaster provided an opportunity for closer South-South cooperation between Haiti and Africa. Surrounded by regional countries with which it shares little in common, Haiti stands to benefit immensely by giving greater importance to its diplomatic ties with Africa. Interestingly, this is coming at the time UNESCO is urging the Haitian government to introduce the teaching of African history in its educational system and to seek membership of the African Union.

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Beyond Frontiers: African Diasporas in America and Development of Africa

By
Simon Ngeenge Tata

Abstract

After the Second World War as African nationalists engaged in the struggle for independence, African-Americans (A-A) became interested in the decolonization struggle and development. It should be noted that A-A in the US constitute the highest number of people of Africa origin in a single country. Through organizations which they created, various strategies were developed to help Africa politically, socially and economically. They equally influenced the foreign policy of the US toward Africa in Congress and the Senate via Congressional Black Caucus (CBA). But to a large degree, their efforts have not yielded fruits because of the unpatriotic nature of African presidents and the evils of neo-colonialism. The absence of, Democracy, good governance, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights, plunged the nations of Africa into Coup d'Etats, secessionist movements, civil strives and internal arms conflicts shortly after independence. These vices invariably hindered the development efforts of A-A. There is, therefore, the need for a more concerted struggle with the A-A assistance. Fortunately, the Arab North Africa has set the ball rolling.

Résumé

Après la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, les nationalistes prirent part à la lutte pour l'indépendance. Les Afro-américains s'intéressèrent à la décolonisation et au développement. Il devrait être noté que le groupe

Afro-Américain aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique constitue un grand nombre de personnes originaires d'Afrique établies dans un seul pays. A travers les organisations créées, plusieurs stratégies furent développées dans le but d'aider l'Afrique politiquement, socialement et économiquement. Ils ont aussi influencé la politique étrangère des Etats-Unis d'Amérique par le Congrès et le Sénat travers le Comité Electoral Noir (Black Caucus). Mais, à un niveau, leurs efforts échouèrent du fait de l'absence de patriotisme des présidents Africains et du néo-colonialisme. L'absence de démocratie, de la bonne gouvernance, de la transparence et du non-respect des droits à l'homme a plongé les nations africaines dans les mouvements sécessionnistes, des guerres civiles et des conflits internes. Le combat amener maintenant est la seconde bataille pour la vraie libération. Cette invariabilité des vices a entravé les efforts de développement des Afro-Américains. L'exemple est donné par les pays de l'Afrique du Nord qui viennent d'engager le combat.

Introduction

African-Americans constitute the largest group of African diasporas. When the people of the continent engaged in the decolonisation struggle after World War II, assistance was received from African-Americans. The discussion on African diasporas must necessarily begin with the story of how multiple African diasporas came about. The first wave of Africans into the United States of America (USA) and Latin America came about through slavery and slave trade. For over four hundred years, millions of Africans were moved out of the African continent to the Americas to work in plantations and mines. During this period, others were taken to Europe, Arab North Africa and to the Middle East.⁷⁸³ Thousands died in transit to these destinations. Those who survived this ordeal were penned like cattle in slave markets and sold by slave merchants to

vins and H.S. Commager, *America: The Story of a Free People*, 3rd Edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, Pp.123-140.

⁷⁸³Ibid, p.151.

plantation owners and to rich individuals who kept them for sheer pleasure.⁷⁸⁴ The end of the slave trade has not stopped the migration of Africans to other continents. For both political, economic, and cultural reasons, Africans are immigrating to the U.S. These new wave of immigrants, constitute what, for lack of a better term, we may call the New African diaspora. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the origin and role of African-American diaspora; both the new and the old to the development of the African continent. The paper will also examine the reasons why their efforts have not yielded enough fruits.

Origin of African Multiple Diasporas

The first wave of African Diaspora is made up of those who were taken to the Americas, Europe and the Middles East as Slaves by the Europeans. As we learn from history, slavery and slave marketing are age-old practices the world over and they seem to have begun because of wars and also probably as a result of the demand for labour to perform menial or debasing jobs. The earliest slaves included debtors, people captured in wars and poor people who sometimes sold their children into slavery for debt payment. In this category are also included people, without kinsmen who were either captured or were sold as punishment for crimes they committed.

The Portuguese explorers were the first Europeans to capture Africans and take them to Europe as slaves in the 15th century. With the discovery of America in 1492, this trade in human beings, intensified. In 1516 king Charles I of Spain formalized the slave trade through the assien to *contract* by authorizing the supply of African slaves to other countries after he had permitted slave traders to supply slaves to Spanish colonies in America. Slave trade soon developed into a big business and a profitable industry. In the late 1770's, half of the slaves brought to Americas were carried in British ships. It is, therefore, quite understandable why the first anti-Slavery movement spearheaded by the Quakers started in Britain and, subsequently,

⁷⁸⁴Elit is D., *The Abolition of the Atlantic slave Trade*, Wisconsin, Wisconsin University Press, 1981. Pp.41-49.

Wilberforce and Clarkson forced the British parliament to pass a law abolishing slave trade in Britain in 1807 and in all British colonies in 1833.⁷⁸⁵

Elsewhere, similar moves were undertaken to abolish the slave trade but the practice continued because many of the economic, social and political- developments that accompanied slavery did not just disappear with the various attempts by abolitionists to stop this trade. Many Latin American countries only ended this trade after accession to independence.⁷⁸⁶

As a result of the slave trade, millions of Africans were taken out of their natal homelands. This gave rise to what is termed today the African Diaspora. By 1960 it was estimated that 24 million Blacks lived in South America, and 19 million in the U.S., fifteen thousand in Europe, and twenty thousand in Canada. Almost all people in Haiti and 85% of the inhabitants of the Dominican Republic are of African descent.⁷⁸⁷ Have these Africans maintained any links with their natal or imagined natal territories in the same way that other groups of Americans have done and continued to do?

Africa-American Diaspora and Development in Africa

Africa-American Diasporas, that is, new and old, have worked tirelessly for the economic development and the political liberation of Africa. Rather than concur to calls for the massive return to the motherland as called for by the back-to-Africa Movement of the late 19th and 20th centuries that resulted in the establishment of Liberia in 1863, the majority of African Americans thought that they were being tricked and that such plan was simply a way for their former enslavers to get rid of them. They decided therefore to remain in the U.S. and

⁷⁸⁵V.G. Fanzo., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, From Pre-Historical Times to the 19thCentury*, Vol. J, London, Macmillan, 1989.pp.50-60.

⁷⁸⁶World Book Encyclopedia N-O pp.106-112.

⁷⁸⁷Rehabbed E.O., *Africa-Americans Contribution to the Liberation Struggle in Africa: The case of the Liberation Support Committee*, New York .American Press, 1972-1979.pp.54-89.

elsewhere in the West where they contributed greatly to build, instead of a massive return to mother Africa. On this premise they established several organisations in an attempt to reconnect and work for Africa development strategies. This lofty strategy has not succeeded much and the frontier between Africans in the continent and those in American Diaspora has not narrowed.

Africare Inc. was founded in the early 1970s and its main objective was to mobilise Africa Americans' support for developing the African continent. What spurred this mobilisation was the long period of the devastating drought in the Sahel region of Africa. It lent valuable support in the area of health, and later it shifted its emphasis to long-term programs in the energy, agriculture, and water supply sectors. It later extended assistance to the problems of refugees and displaced persons in Chad, Somalia and Southern Africa. The activities carried out from 1971 to 1990 promoted the African course in the US. Africare Inc. worked directly with rural Africans. It got Africans to be an integral part of its programs. It hoped this would lead to the socio-economic upliftment of rural masses that constitute more than 70% of the population. Africare Inc. instituted an educational program in the US to educate African- Americans about African needs and also for them to get involved in African affairs and thus garner support for the motherland, in the manner America Jews, Polish Americans and Spanish Americans do for their respective countries. In the health sector it provided drinking water, made provisions for health services and packaged hospitals consisting of essential medical equipment and supplies given to several African countries. It also provided technical assistance through provision of equipment and training of host nationals in repairs and maintenance. They also trained volunteers in rural health care delivery systems.⁷⁸⁸

Africare Inc. also worked to build a sustained African constituency among future leaders of America and continued to maintain functional offices in many African countries. Between 1971 and 1990 African Inc. worked in more than 25 African nations and by 1990 it was running more than 200 programs in various parts of Africa. It has certainly

⁷⁸⁸Ibid

made an impressive contribution to African development with resources from myriads of sources within the US particularly USAID⁷⁸⁹. The organisation's non- involvement in politics account for its success on the continent.

Another organisation set up in the early 1970s by the Diasporan in the US and which has lent material, financial and other forms of concrete support to Africans in the continent is the African Liberation Support committee (ALSC). The principal aim of the ALSC was to assist African liberation movements in South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde Islands and other areas of Africa which were still under colonial domination in their struggle for independence. Set up in the early 1970s, the ALSC gave impetus to the work of other organisations before it like the Council of African Affairs (CAA) and the American Negro Leadership conference on Africa (ANLCA) that had pursued in the 1930s and 1960s. With the emergence of independent African nations in the 1960s, many African - Americans began visiting Africa. This increased the growth of their affinities with Africa and also enabled them to identify with the liberation struggle in Africa, as it was similar to their struggle for racial equality in the US⁷⁹⁰.

Another way by which African-Americans helped the African Liberation movements was through the organisation of protests and mass demonstrations similar to those organized against the Vietnam War in order to put pressure on US administrations. Successful demonstrations were carried on Africa liberation day, May 25, every year or on a weekend after this day. Some of the most successful demonstrations were organised on May 27, 1972 in the U.S., Toronto, Grenada, Dominica and Antigua. This was to show the world their support for the struggle their brothers were waging against US policies in Southern Africa. In addition, they protested against European settlers' suppression of liberation movements.⁷⁹¹ Prominent

⁷⁸⁹Rehabbed E.O. Africa-American and the Mobilisation of Support for African Causes The case of Africa, INC,1971- 1990.pp.85-103

⁷⁹⁰Afri ca-American Contribution to Africa, Boston, Mass. Press 1980.p8.

⁷⁹¹Ibid

personalities who organised and led these demonstrations included - Chairman Owuso Sadaukai, Mayor Richard G. Hatcher of Gary, Indiana, U.S. representative Charles Diggs Jr., Louis Stokes, SCLC president Ralph D. Abernathy, Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton and Rev. Lucius Walker. The demonstrations also served as fund-raising drives to support the Africa Liberation movements.⁷⁹²

Similar campaigns were organized to boycott Gulf Oil, accused of giving huge sums of money to Portugal to finance military campaigns against liberation movements. They also campaigned for the boycott of Portuguese products and the banning of South Africa coins. Through these activities, the ALSC succeeded in raising awareness in the U.S. and in Africa about the liberation movements against the apartheid regime and the white minority regimes in Southern Africa.

On the political front, African-Americans waged a relentless fight through Congress to influence U.S. policy towards Africa. This idea led to the creation in 1971 of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). The CBC emerged as Africa Lobbyist and pressure group in the U.S. Congress. As a group representing an under-privileged people, the CBC was expected, through bargaining and corporation with other interest groups, to work out policies beneficial to its own people in Africa, for instance actions against white minority regimes in Southern Africa and aid for the development of Africa.⁷⁹³

The CBC succeeded in getting congress to pass a number of legislations against the apartheid regime. It also mobilised support for African liberation movements and increased US aid to disaster areas in Africa. Hon. Charles Diggs and his colleagues made untiring efforts to sustain the fight for the African course for many years. Although their successes were modest because of the relative poverty of Blacks, there is no doubt that its existence did demonstrate that there was an African constituency in the U.S. political system. As Lemelle puts it, “since the U.S. is run as a power broker system ... only interests whose brokers are represented in the circle of power really influence policy

⁷⁹²Rehabbed E.O., The Congressional Black Caucus and United State Policy towards Africa, Washington, DC, 1971- 1990 pp.13-33.

⁷⁹³Ibid. p.11.

decisions”.⁷⁹⁴ Below are some of the reasons advanced to justify CBC’s average performance:

1. Unlike other groups for instance the American Jews, Spanish, and Portuguese Americans who are financially strongly represented in “every capillary of the vast American economy”⁷⁹⁵ the African-Americans still remain in the periphery of the America economy and so cannot achieve much politically.

2. There is gross under representation of African Americans in the U.S. Congress. This significantly reduces the leverage of CBC in foreign policy formulation. Although it has been argued that the political leverage of the over 35 million blacks in the U.S. is not very strong to garner a real political force for the simple reason that black voters have not developed the political sophistication and clout that would attract presidential aspirants. But in the elections of Barack Obama the situation changed as many African Americans became interested in registering and voting. Like Latino Americans their vote has become a force to reckon with in any political debate in the US.

3. Ultra-conservative Congressmen/women particularly during the cold war labelled and treated liberation movements in Southern Africa as communist organizations and therefore these movements were seen by successive U.S administrations as enemies.

If we go by Robin Cohen’s definition of the diaspora as “a group of people who live outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories, and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religions they adopt, and cultures they produce, we can say that the African-Americans who are descendants of slaves comprise only a segment of the Black diaspora in the US. There is an increasing number of emigrants leaving the continent for diverse reasons and settling in the U S. This is the new African diaspora.

⁷⁹⁴N.Safaran., *Israel: The Embattled Ally*, London, the Belknap Press of Harvard University press, 1978.pp.24-45.

⁷⁹⁵G.B. N.Ayittey., *African Betrayed*, New York, printed in USA. 1992 p.xx.

The New African Diaspora and the African Continent

Unlike the descendants of African slaves, the new African Diaspora in the U.S. includes Africans fleeing the continent in search of green pastures in the U.S. as well as Africans who after their studies in the US prefer to become permanent residents; US citizens. These immigrants, unlike the old diaspora, know their countries of origin, have family members and even own property in Africa. They regularly send remittances to family members back home and visit the continent frequently. Some of them are very successful businessmen, academics and rising political stars. A few examples suffice to substantiate this argument. M. Forbi originally from Cameroon is a highly successful physician, internationally recognized for his work on obesity and has featured in the renowned Magazine, *Ebony*. Senator Barack Obama, son of a Kenyan immigrant, was elected as the 5th Africa American to sit in the US Senate. In 2008 he was the first Africa American to become president of the US. Prominent African scholars like Ali Mazrui, of Kenya and Chinua Achebe, of Nigeria have sought and had permanent residence in the U.S.

How can the new African diaspora who, are indeed, citizens of Africa and the U.S. work for the development of Africa? Given the privileged position of the new African diaspora, they can promote the economic development of Africa. This can be done through several ways. Those of them with both economic and political clout, can influence the U.S. government, African governments as well as both governmental and non-governmental organizations working with African governments and civil society. The new diaspora, like the old one have created new organizations to foster the economic development of Africa.

The new diaspora intelligentsia have promoted academic exchanges between African and American universities. This is worked out through inter-university cooperation linkages or study abroad programs. Some of these programs already exist but they are few. The cooperation linkage called *Crossing Borders* exists between my home university, University of Yaounde I and Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and this is a common feature with many African

countries. There is also cooperation links between local churches in Africa and those of the US.

The new Diaspora have sought ways of increasing the flow of trade between Africa and the U.S. They have helped African countries to make maximum use of opportunities of increasing the volume of trade with the US through the African Growth and Opportunity Act(AGOA).They hold periodic meetings with African political and economic leaders to promote economic developments and good governance.

The civil society is an asset for promoting the development of Africa. Unfortunately, in many African countries, the civil society is weak and lack appropriate leadership. With the experience from the U S, the new African-American diaspora has helped to develop strategies of strengthening and working with civil society associations. In recent times, meaningful changes have occurred in certain countries because of the motivation and determination of civil society organizations.

Why have their Efforts not Yielded much Fruits?

Internal Factors

There had been a lot of debate that Africans themselves are the architects of their own doom and have been largely responsible for their self-destruction. In support of this argument, proponents refer to the African old saying that “in a mourning house, the visitor is not expected to weep more than the bereaved” Drawing inspiration from African-Americans’ efforts, it really seem outsiders are more worried and concerned about Africa than Africans themselves. We will find out how this very strong assertion is justifiable and whether it has any foundation at all.

There are many problems that internally hinder developments in Africa. The major problem Africa faces is that of unpatriotic attitude of a majority of its leaders. Under development in Africa is centred around undemocratic leadership than any other factor. Ayittey, in the prologue to his book says “AFRICANS ARE ANGRY”. They are really angry with their leaders”. He states that many Africans have suffered imprisonment and untold hardships because they are yearning

for change. He says “it is a continuation of their struggle for the second and true liberation of Africa from both white oppression and black tyranny”⁷⁹⁶.

He reveals that what set the wheels of his crusade in motion was the prevailing elite mentality that what has contributed to most of Africa’s economic woes are such external factors as lingering effects of Western Slavery, colonialism, and exploitative international economic system. They were little analysis on the contributory role played by internal factors such as defective incompetent, political leadership, economic mismanagement, corruption and political repression. A scientific analysis of any crisis, therefore, requires an unerring scrutiny of all possible causes internal as well as external. He concluded that “only the examination of the external factors received official sanction in most places in Africa”⁷⁹⁷.

Ayittey is perfect in his analysis. Most African leaders have turned out to be an embarrassment not only to their people, but to the entire world. When elected to power, nearly every African despot, struggles to manipulate the constitution so that he remains in power for ever. During this time, he makes new laws which safeguard his position. Because the laws are unpopular, he turns into tyrant and rules by decree, arrests political critics and opposition leaders, sets up censorship of the press, rigs elections and monopolises the media. Following these acts, he becomes more and more isolated for fear of his life. In almost all cases, the president would begin a process of self-enrichment by embezzling and siphoning billions of his country money to deposit in foreign banks. In some cases, they siphon even money borrowed for the country’s development. While the majority of his people live in squalor and poverty, (no medicines in hospitals, no teachers in schools) foreign debt keep mounting. But these Presidents would have nothing to show for the loans they contracted except that they, their parties top brass, their tribal mafia and close relatives are competing for easy wealth and hideous display of affluence and

⁷⁹⁶Ayittey. *African Betrayed*, p.xv.

⁷⁹⁷Spiro H J. (ed) *Patterns of African Development*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1967.p.20.

periodic sojourns in the castles they have acquired overseas.⁷⁹⁸

Mismanagement, incompetence and institutionalised corruption are the order of the day. This happened because; to feel secure, such Presidents flood the entire government services, military, civil service, parastatals with men from their clans. Then government contracts, purchases and loan programs are systematically manipulated to party officials, tribal groups and the political well connected.⁷⁹⁹ While the economy is being mismanaged by the favourites of the regime these vampire and tribal elite are raiding the national treasury in all sophisticated ways. The appointed officials placed in strategic positions in both public and Para-public purchased luxurious cars and other essentials to maintain the life-style of this political aristocracy.⁸⁰⁰

Presidents acquire Absolute Powers in Africa

Most African heads of state when in power no longer sees any conflict between state interest and their persons nor a dividing line between state property and their private property. When the country cannot bear this state of affairs and begins to collapse, such Presidents take a number of steps to “rescue” the situation. They begin the process of buying specific friends, drastically reduce the salaries of state employees, but raise the prices of all essential goods four-fold. But at the same time they increase the salary of the army top brass, security forces and the magistracy. They then authorised the creation of large number of political parties in the guise of showing the whole world that there is advance democracy. But more so with the strategy of creating confusion and infighting among them in the up-coming election which the president must win by all means.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁸Nwankwo, African Dictators, The logic of Tyranny and Lessons for History, Enugu, Fourth dimension Publishing Co. Ltd. 1990.pp.4-5.

⁷⁹⁹Ngwana A.S., The Struggle: For Political Pluralism and Democracy in Cameroon. ‘Douala, Jameson Broadman Press, 2001.pp ... 123-229.

⁸⁰⁰J-O Gros, (ed) Cameroon: Politics and Society in Critical perspectives, New-York, University Press of America, 2003.pp13 1-140.

⁸⁰¹Chinua Achebe, The Trouble with Nigeria, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishing Co.Ltd.1983.pp.45-55.

There is also a whole cycle of events which have been happening but which now are intensified and accelerated. Many people are mysteriously either killed or they just disappear, mysteriously. Fire razes down buildings housing important government agencies and documentary centres. Scan the countries of the entire Africa continent one by one and you will see more than eighty per cent have gone through the scenario outlined above even where there were successive waves of military regimes.⁸⁰² Thus the gap between the diaspora and Africans at home remains despite all efforts to narrow it.

It is very difficult even to explain the attitude of some African leaders. Take only these isolated specific examples: it is reported⁸⁰³ that in 1988 president Ahmed Kerekou of Benin accepted radioactive nuclear waste from the French and then decided that the waste be buried on the outskirts of Abomey I, the stronghold of the opposition. Similarly it is alleged that in Cameroon there was a mass vaccination of girls only in all schools in the opposition stronghold of the North West Region. It created terrible scare and resistance for that type of vaccination designed only for girls. Rumours were rife that the vaccination was aimed at sterilizing all girls of a certain age group and to wage war against the fast growing population in this opposition stronghold.

In 1989 the president of Angola is also reported to have signed a contract with a Swiss businessman to store five millions of toxic waste in Angola for two billions dollars⁸⁰⁴. These terrible crimes could not have been done without the authority and/or connivance of the African leaders concerned.

Most presidents in post-independent Africa have ruined their nations to death. They have organised a tribal Mafia, for example, in Kenya and Zimbabwe that let thousands killed in post-elections violence. They have sat at the apex of the growing empire of graft, looting and in the end left their “subjects”, which in fact are

⁸⁰²West African, June 20, 1988 p. 1109

⁸⁰³“Africa Report” March-April 1989 p. 5

⁸⁰⁴W. Rodney., *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London; Bogle-L’ouverture Publications, 1986. pp. 103-162.

considered their objects, with shattered hopes, unfulfilled wishes, broken promises and unimagined dreams. Were they alone? (Harbeson 1989).The on-going revolts against monarchical presidents in Arab North Africa is a pointer to absence of democracy and good governance. Non-alteration of power democratically leads to civil strives, arms insurrections and coup d'états to come to the centre of power. On-going events in North Africa and the Arab world is a “struggle for the second and true liberation of Africa from both white oppression and black tyranny” as predicted by Ayittey.

External Factors

Although, from the facts presented above, there is overwhelming evidence to support the conviction that most African leaders have been responsible for their own destruction, it is still true to say that a great part of the blame is on the West. There are various ways in which the interplay of external forces have misled African leaders and consequently has led to the underdevelopment of Africa. The West in order to protect their interests, is all too often mute and overlooks the failings of rulers in former colonies. This is illustrated by what happens in Kenya, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic (CAR), Equatorial Guinea, Zaire, and Malawi, to name only these few. By leaving corrupt, inefficient, dubious leaders in power, there is a certain kind of “stability” which will then guarantee chances for the exploitation of the country. France, for example, is specialized in this type of diplomacy.⁸⁰⁵

There is also a certain ability and policy of “not meddling in the internal affairs of independent nations” where no strategic interests are at stake. We have seen recently, punitive expeditions mounted in Iraq, Yugoslavia (Serbia), Libya, West Indies and Haiti to forcefully remove dictators in those places. In those cases, there was no actual dividing line between internal and external affairs.

The Western mentality, which holds that “blacks enslaved in the past, must now be elevated to sainthood” effectively shields corrupt

⁸⁰⁵P. Manning., *Francophone Sub-Sahara Africa*, New-York, Cambridge University Press, 1986.pp.58-75.

black African leaders from condemnation. As such they committed “heinous atrocities” against their people. Thus, dictators would slaughter their countrymen and the Western media might not carry the story.⁸⁰⁶

Even the Soviet Union and China whose socialist ideologies are very akin to African traditional society would only yap and essentially do nothing.⁸⁰⁷ Although Soviet Officials were right to point out that “the true causes of Africa plight ... are colonial and neo-colonial exploitation by the Western powers and the transactional corporations”, but Soviet African policy is a dismal failure. Much of what it attempted to do was ill-conceived and ill-executed, half-hearted and meanly meagre or plainly conditioned by non-African consideration. As for China, she competed with the USSR to recruit the allegiance of the African nations by supporting their liberation movements but would not go beyond this. What a pity then for Africa!⁸⁰⁸

It is also true that the West was often seduced by the charisma and the euphoric verbiage of third world despots to provide them with substantial aid as in the case of Iraq (under the Shah), Nicaragua (under Samosa), the Philippines (under Marcos) Zaire (under Mobuto), Kenya (under Mio) and Cameroon (under Ahidjo). When Mobuto disguised his tomfoolery as anti-communism, the West bought his argument as well as his corrupt and anti-Communist predilections. They did not pay much attention to his corrupt and anti-democratic government. They equally ignored the fact that he was torturing his people.

Because of dictatorship, most areas of the continent were plunged into civil strives ,armed insurrections and revolts as witnessed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Sudan, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Senegal, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Ivory Coast, Chad Central Africa Republic and Uganda. On this scenario, the

⁸⁰⁶M.I. Goldman., *What went Wrong with Perestroika*, New York, NW Norton and Company.Ltd.1992.p.82?

⁸⁰⁷Ayittey .*African Betrayed*. pp. xx.

⁸⁰⁸Samu

continent has not been able to have an African Central Bank, enough security to attract investors, realise her dream of a United Africa and the Economic Integration of Africa that was envisaged for the year 2000.

Conclusion

After learning of all these evils which have frustrated the development ambitions of the Diasporas and Africans back in the continent, the conclusion is that many Africans see their leaders as the problem. What can now be done? Is it too late to mount a rescue operation to save Africa? Many people believe that a lot can be done by African-American diasporas and nations who benefited from slave trade to adequately compensate Africa. They argue that if a complete history of slavery, the slave trade and neo-colonialism are not documented now, the new educated generation of Africans that takes over tomorrow and learns of these terrible atrocities will be bitter. In a globalized world where communication and movement of people, goods, and information is rendered easy by the new information and communication technologies, the old and new African diasporas have a unique window of opportunity to work for the development of the African continent. With the material, intellectual, economic and political resources possessed by the African Diaspora in the U S, they can spearhead meaningful change in Africa. They do not need to reinvent the wheel for they only need to copy and adapt the methods used by Jews to promote the development of their natal (imagined natal) homeland, the Israeli State.

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The Conflict of Civilizations: The Case of Arab and Western Civilizations

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Abstract

This chapter seeks to examine the fundamental basis of disagreement between Arab Civilization and Western Civilization with reference to North Africa and the Middle East. It comprehensively examines the core values of Arab and Western Civilizations that have made them prone to conflict. Specifically, we have attempted a reflection on the major causes of conflict between Arab and Western civilization. We have equally analysed the factors that have fuelled this conflict and presents classic instances where conflicts have occurred between the two Civilizations in North Africa and the Middle East. The paper closes with an examination of some of the consequences of this conflict. The research finding is that the thrust of this conflict stems from ideological frontiers that exist between the two groups. The conclusion arrived at in this research shows that conflict between the Arab and Western Civilizations as seen in North Africa and the Middle East dates far back into history. However, it has been intensified following the demise of ideological differences that dominated the Cold War period and the emergence of a New World Order.

Key words: Civilization, Conflict, Arab and Western Culture.

Résumé

Cet article a comme objectif, l'examen des fondements du désaccord ou des différends entre les civilisations arabe et occidentale dans

l'Afrique du nord et dans le Moyen- Orient. Nous analysons les principales valeurs des civilisations arabes et celles de l'occident qui ont entraîné les conflits entre les deux civilisations. Il s'agit plus spécifiquement de mener une réflexion sur les causes des conflits entre les civilisations arabe et occidentale. Il est aussi question de présenter les cas classiques des conflits entre les deux civilisations dans l'Afrique du Nord et le Moyen-Orient. La présente étude s'achève avec l'examen de quelques conséquences de ces conflits. La conclusion à laquelle nous avons abouti est que les conflits entre la civilisation arabe et celle de l'Ouest existent depuis fort longtemps. Cependant, ces conflits se sont intensifiés avec la fin du différend idéologique qui dominait la période de la guerre froide. Cela a favorisé l'émergence d'un nouvel ordre mondial.

Mots Clés: Civilisation, Conflit, Culture Arabe et occidentale.

Introduction

The concept of Conflict of Civilizations has been a question of intellectual discussion following Samuel P. Huntington theory of 'Clash of Civilizations' produced in an article and a book. In expounding his theory, Huntington posits that "Peoples cultural and religious identities will be the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War world".⁸⁰⁹ This theory was originally formulated in a 1992 lecture at the American Enterprise Institute. It was then developed in a 1993 foreign affairs article and later published in a book titled *"The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order"*. In the article, Huntington argues that

el, P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, no. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 22.,; 49; WWW.D:\The_Clash_of Civilizations.Html.);

⁸⁰⁹See Muhammad, Asadi, "A Critique of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations", *Selves and others*, 2007 Retrieved 1. February, 2011; Ronald, Inglehart and Pippa, Norris, "The True Clash of Civilizations", *Global Policy Forum*, 2003, Retrieved 11 February, 2011; Robert, T. Sandi, *Civilization Conflict? : 'A Review of The Clash O Civilization: Remaking the World Order' by Samuel P. Huntington*", *Pletisten*, Vol. XV, No. I, 2000 among others.

‘the defining characteristics of the 21st Century will be a Clash of Civilizations.’ In his view, conflicts between Civilizations will supplant the conflicts between nation states and ideologies that characterized the 19th and 20th Century⁸¹⁰.

The views of Huntington have come under serious scrutiny and have been strongly challenged by many scholars.⁸¹¹ However, the interest of this chapter is to examine the fundamental basis of conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations as it occurs in North Africa and the Middle East. The essence is to bring to the limelight the reasons for the conflict, the factors that have fuelled the conflict, and the instances where these civilizations have clashed and discuss the consequences. However, before addressing these issues, it will be relevant to define the term civilization and distinguish between Arab Civilization and Western Civilization.

The meaning of Civilization

The word civilization in Latin is *civilis*, meaning civil, which in Latin is *civis*, meaning citizens and *civitas*, meaning city or city state.⁸¹² The definition of civilization has gone through intellectual laboratory since the 16th Century to produce a dynamic meaning. One author defines civilization as “the sum total of all progress made by man in every sphere of action and from every point of view in so far as the progress helps towards the spiritual perfecting of individuals as the progress of all progress.” This expresses a dual opinion: one regarding civilization as purely as materialistic and the other regarding it both as ethical and material. Thus, the world crisis of 1923 was due to a humanity having

⁸¹⁰<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization>, Retrieved 11 February, 2011.

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"<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization>,"<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilization>, Retrieved 11 February, 2011.

⁸¹¹Ibid

⁸¹²S. P, Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” pp. 23-24; Oswald Spengler, Decline of the West: Perspectives of, World History, 1919, Retrieved 11 February 2011.

lost the ethical conception of civilization.

Others have said the word civilization refers to ‘a cultural entity, which can either be a group or nationality, built on a single cultural symbol. In other words, Civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have, which of course, distinguish them from other people. Consequently, civilizations tend to develop intricate cultures, which have a tendency to spread and influence other cultures. They are defined by common characteristic features like literature, language, history, professional arts and organized’ religions. It can involve a large group of people or a very small number of people. That is, it can include nation states or an individual nation state.⁸¹³

Arnold J. Tonybee and Oswald Spengle agree with Huntington that civilizations are dynamic in nature since they rise and fall, they decline or merge and as history puts it, civilizations disappear and are buried in the sands of time.⁸¹⁴ Spengle says civilizations experience a cycle of birth, life, decline and death; often supplanted by a new civilization with a potent new culture, formed around a compelling new cultural symbol. Tonybee explored and traced the rise and decline of twenty-one civilizations and five arrested civilization of these only about five have survived. He explains the decline was because of failure of a creative minority to meet some important challenges.

Consequently, historians have chronicled the existence of many civilizations in the past and some still exist in the present. Huntington has identified about eight different world civilizations amongst, which the Western, Arab/Islamic and Sinic (Chinese) civilizations are the most prone to conflict.⁸¹⁵ However, the focus of this chapter is on the conflict between Western and Arab Civilizations with reference to North Africa and the Middle East. It is relevant at this point to state

⁸¹³Arnold J. Tonybee, *The end of History*, O. Spengle *Decline of the West*; S. P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” p. 24.

⁸¹⁴S. P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” pp.30-31.

⁸¹⁵V. G. Fanson, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges* vol 1, From prehistoric times to the nineteenth century, London, Macmillan Publishers, 1989, p.78.

that these two civilizations for long have been the major cultures, which have encountered the most conflicts since their inception even in other parts of the world.

Core Values of Arab and Western Civilizations

The religion of the Arabs is Islam and Islam is not only a religion but is also a civilization. According to V. G. Fanzo among others, Islam is a religion that was founded by Prophet Mohammed in the 7th Century BC and is a civilization of the Arabs of Arabia where the faith was founded. The word Islam means submission to Allah (God) and the adherents of Islam are called Muslims.⁸¹⁶ They make up about one-fifth of the world's population (i.e. 1.6 billion of the 6.8 billion of the world's population in 2009 and 20 per cent of the 1.6 billion is found in North Africa and the Middle East). They are spread across many different nations and ethnic groups. They are connected by religion, and a share sense of belonging.⁸¹⁷

Islam as a religion and civilization emphasizes unity and defence of fellow Muslims despite the existence of many different Muslim brotherhoods. The religion began in Arabia and expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula in the form of a vast Muslim empire built on theocracy. It stretches from Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Americas.⁸¹⁸ Therefore, Islam as an Arabic cultural and social phenomenon has been propagated by the Arabs throughout a large part of the known world, particularly, through the Jihads. In this sense, Muslims of the world and, especially, those of North Africa and the Middle East, can be said to have been brought under Arab culture or civilization by the mere fact of embracing Islam.

The countries of North Africa; Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt form part of the Greater Middle East and constitute at least 98 per cent Muslims. They are either Islamic States or have endorsed

⁸¹⁶File:/ID:Muslim_ World.htm, Retrieved 11 February 2011.

⁸¹⁷Ibid

⁸¹⁸File:///D:/Westem_ World.htm, Retrieved 16 February 2011.

Islam as the state religion. Thus, Islam manifests in the politics of these states as Islamism and they have Islamic parties. In Algeria for example, the Islamic party has taken over power at the provincial level. Most of these movements are militant Islamic groups and sometimes accused of practicing Islamic terrorism. They use Sharia law in the state and the Sharia or Islamic law does not distinguish between “matters of church” and matters of state”. The Ulama functions as both jurist and the Ologians. In practice, Islamic rulers frequently bypass the Sharia court with a parallel system of so-called “grievance court” over which they have sole control. The Sharia law implemented by Muslim States is in Arabic and exists in many variations. That used in North Africa is *Maliki*.

On the other hand, Western Civilization has evolved beyond the influence of the Ancient Greek and Roman Civilizations due to commercial, scientific and industrial revolutions as well as the advent and expansion of Christianity from Western Europe. Since the periods of Renaissance, Enlightenment and Colonialism; the notion of Western Civilization has expanded to include the Americas. Current consensus would locate the West in the cultures and peoples of North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Israel.⁸¹⁹

Broadly speaking, the concept of Western Culture is generally linked to the Western World and encompasses a set of literally, scientific, political, artistic and philosophical principles that set it apart from other civilizations. The Western Culture enjoys relatively strong economies and stable governments. They allow freedom of religion; have chosen democracy as a form of government, and favour capitalism and international trade. They are heavily influenced by Judeo-Christian values, and have some form of political and military alliance or cooperation. From a sociological stand point, western world are defined by cultures directly derived from European cultures and constitute what is termed western society. Despite the decline of Christianity in the 20th century and the growth of secularism, most Western societies nominally identify themselves as Christians.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁹File:///D:/Western_World.htm, Retrieved 16 February 2011.

⁸²⁰S. P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”pp. 22-49; See also

The conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations constitutes what Huntington calls “Clash of Civilizations”. It stems basically from the fact that Christianity and Islam, upon which both Western and Arab Civilizations hinge are missionary religions, seeking conversion of others, and rest on the belief by both sides that only their faith is the correct one.⁸²¹ On his part, David Wilkinson calls this clash of civilizations “Clash of Cultural Spheres”.⁸²² This coupled with other competing factors have produced cracks between the two civilizations that have resulted sometimes in violent conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East.

Causes of Conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations

The causes of the conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations in North Africa and the Middle East could be explained within the context of the general reasons why civilizations clash put forth by Huntington.⁸²³ Firstly, civilizations clash because of the differences which exist between them. Recalling the discussion of the core values of the Arab and Western civilizations, show clearly that both civilizations differ from one another in terms of history, language, culture and tradition. There is no gainsaying that both civilizations view God and man, citizens and states, husband and wife, rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority and equality and hierarchy differently. These differences have existed for centuries and in some cases have generated violent and protracted conflicts particularly in North Africa.

Secondly, since the world has been reduced to a global village, interactions between Arab and Western Civilizations have intensified civilization consciousness and awareness of differences between them these differences have produced animosities which go far back in to the past. This is so because cultural specificities are less mutable and, hence, cannot be easily compromised. Thirdly, the processes of social

⁸²¹David. Wilkinson,

⁸²²S.P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” pp.30-35.

⁸²³S. P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” pp.47-49

mutations and economic modernization throughout the world have separated people from longstanding local identities. It has equally weakened the nation state as a source of identity. Therefore, religious fundamentalisms have moved in to fill the gap. This is so for both Western Christianity and Islam.⁸²⁴

Finally, successful economic regionalism rooted along the lines of common civilizations reinforces civilization consciousness and conflict of civilizations. For instance, the European Community rests on the shared foundation of European culture and Western Christianity. Thus, it could not admit the ten non-Arab Muslim states of Europe that had to constitute their own Economic Cooperation Organization.⁸²⁵ Similarly, culture and religion also form the basis of economic cooperation organizations, which brings North African countries as members of the Arab League and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Consequently, differences in culture and religion have created differences over policy issues that range from human rights, to immigration, to environment and 'trade. The efforts of the West to transport its values of democracy and liberalism into the Arab world of North Africa and the Middle East; maintain its military predominance as well as advance its economic interest in the area has remained counterproductive. These two civilizations are distinct from one another in the domain of ideology, custom, religion, political system and policy. Therefore, there have been various factors that have fuelled and even triggered the conflict between the Arab and Western civilizations in North Africa and the Middle East.

Factors that have fuelled the Conflict

One major factor responsible for conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations has been the question of religion. The two

⁸²⁴Ibid

⁸²⁵V. G Fanzo, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges* vol 1, pp. 78-84 ; B. Barkindo, M. Omolewa and E. N; Maduakor, *Africa and the Wider World 1: West and North Africa Since 1800*, Nigeria, Longman,1989, pp.9,55.

civilizations are based on two separate religious beliefs. The West practice Christianity and the Arabs practice Islam. There are certain issues imbedded in these two religions that breed conflict and in some occasions, have resulted to violence. Firstly, Islam, the religion of the Arabs, after it was founded by Mohammed in 622 BC, and propagated by his followers through the jihads, divided the world into two. There is the Abode of Islam “*Dar al Islam*” and the Abode of war “*Dar al Harp*’. The Abode of war meant the country not yet under Muslim rule or the country of pagans or infidels.⁸²⁶

Thus, according to the Muslim Holy Book (Koran) and belief, all non- Muslims were unbelievers and this came under sharp contrast with the Christian Bible and belief propagated by the West.⁸²⁷ There are several instances where violent conflicts have erupted on the bases of religious differences. The case of Algeria is a good example. When the French invaded Algeria in 1830, the Algerian Muslims turned their resistance against French occupation into a holy war that lasted over 50 years. According to the Algerians, the French were infidels and they could not allow the future of their country in the hands of these Christian infidels. They, therefore, rallied the different brotherhoods in Algeria under the leadership off Abdel Kadir and put forth a very strong resistance against the French, which the French found difficult to subdue. Still on religious lines, Egypt under Mohammad Ali refused to help the French to conquer Algeria and the rest of the Maghreb because he could not go to war against his Muslim brothers. In the same way, Tunisia and morocco, which initially supported the French against Algeria during the French invasion and occupation, turned and helped Algeria with the supply of arms because they were sympathizing with their fellow Muslims.⁸²⁸

⁸²⁶M. R oberts, History of the World, Oxford, Helican, 1992, pp. 264-274; G. E. Von Grunebaum, Classical Islam: A History 600-1258, Translated by Katherine Watson, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1970, pp. 47-48.

⁸²⁷B. Bakindo, M. Omolewa and E. N. Maduakor; Africa and the Wider World 1: West and North Africa since 1800, Nigeria, Longman, 1989, pp.196-209.

⁸²⁸<http://www.megaessays.com/essay-search/north-africa.html>Retrived 11 February 2011.

Conflict has equally occurred in countries where the two religions were being practiced. A typical example is Sudan where the Catholic Bishops have accused the Sudanese government in Khartoum of waging a holy war against Christians who make up only 10 per cent of the population. Here, Sharia or the Islamic law was re-imposed with new vigour: women were lashed for what they called improper dressing; other corporal punishment like amputations and stoning were meted on thieves and women who committed adultery. The law even allows crucifixion.⁸²⁹ This explains, in part, why the Western world, which greatly upholds the respect of fundamental human rights has supported the Southern Christian dominated Sudan.

Secondly, Islam and Christianity are missionary religions seeking the conversion of others through war.⁸³⁰ Huntington holds the view that the post-Cold War conflict has been mostly between World Civilizations, which have been primarily defined by religion. He continued that conflicts involving Islamic Civilisation have been particularly common and violent; and that Islamic Civilization has been the greatest threat to Western Civilization. In the Middle East for instance, religion is no doubt a significant issue. This is so because the region is the birth place of three major world religions among others; Islam, Christianity and Judaism. It is relevant to state here that each of these religious identities took their religion seriously. To further complicate the religious differences, the region has sites or holy places and shrines, which are very significant to these different religious groups.

This religious difference between the Arab and Western Civilization manifest in a rift in the Middle East with the creation of the state of Israel. For, Israel stands at the forefront of this modern

ERLINK "http://httpllwww.megaessays.comlessay-searchlnorth-africa.htmlRetrieved"httpllwww.megaessays.comlessay-searchlnorth-africa.htmlRetrleveld 11 February 2011.

⁸²⁹The word Christianity has been used to refer to Western Civilization and not the religion only.

⁸³⁰Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, *The Times Guide to the Middle East: The Arab World and its Neighbours*, London, Times Book, 1993, pp.103-107.

civilization as the only country that represents the Western Civilization in the Middle East. In contrast to the events of post-World War II, the Jewish people have not just been victims but also frontline fighters against the forces of Arab Civilization that threatens Western Civilization. For example, during the Gulf War, of 1991, Saddam Hussein sent scud missiles to Israel fortunately Israel did not respond. Meanwhile, brutal killings of civilians by Islamic Arab suicide bombers and terrorist in Israel have remained common occurrence and executed in the name of “Allah” and with the blessing of “Allabu-Akbar”.⁸³¹

Apart from religion, Arab Culture and Western Civilization share different political views. While the West practices democracy, almost all Arab states practice the theocratic system of government. By this the leader of the state equally exercises religious leadership. It is worth mentioning that there is divine kingship or rule in most Arab countries. That is, inheritance within the royal family, which allows for the establishment of Monarchies. This form of government is autocratic, repressive and has come under attack by the Western type of government known as democracy. By this, people are given the right to elect their leaders and there is freedom of expression. The conflict occurs when the USA, which is the leader of the Western civilization, has tried to institute democracy in theocratic states like Iran and Iraq. This has often met with stiff resistance and explains why the USA has been viewed as “the Great Satan” by none other than the political leader of Iran, a major Islamic state. Thus, since the Muslims perceive democracy as oppression to their culture, there is bound to be conflict anytime the West tries to democratize theocracy.⁸³²

Contrary to the view expressed above, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris have argued that the “True Clash of Civilizations” between Muslim World and the West is caused by the Muslim rejection of the West’s more liberal sexual values, rather than a difference in political

⁸³¹P. S luglett and M. Farouk-Sluglet, *The Times Guide*, p

⁸³²Ronald, Inglehart and Pippa, Norris, “The True Clash of Civilization”, *Global Policy Forum*, Marchi April 2003, Retrieved 11 February 2011.

ideology⁸³³. Whatever the case, conflict has remained eminent whenever autocracy or theocracy came in contact with democracy or liberal ideas; since they oppose each other.

Besides, Western and Islamic or Arab Civilizations have conflicted when Women's participation in national life was facilitated by transplanting US educational institutions such as the American Universities of Beirut and, Cairo, the Robert College of Istanbul and the Beirut College for women. These institutions not only educated a new generation of national leaders but also helped to relax patriarchal opposition to women's education and male-female relationships. As a result, Women began to enter the labour force as skilled professionals in law, medicine, teaching and other walks of life. Unfortunately, the hard-won rights of Muslim Women to pursue professional careers and enjoy a degree of equality with men in their society have been increasingly attacked in the Muslim World with the rise of reactionary fundamentalism. The reversal began in 1979 Iranian revolution. Iran's new clerical leader re-imposed strict Islamic dress and behaviour codes for both men and women; enforced by 'moral squads' who patrol neighbourhood watching for infractions.⁸³⁴

Moreover, Islamic countries have stagnated economically for centuries. Arab countries with the world's richest resources have not been able to use their financial power for constructive development of their countries and have failed to advance their societies. A glaring example has been the series of revolutions that have occurred recently in most Islamic states like Tunisia, Egypt and Libya as well as other Middle East countries due to the failure of these governments to undertake tangible economic reforms. This is partly because all Arab countries are ruled by dictators and undemocratic regimes. Again, science and technology levels remain virtually underdeveloped in most Arab countries. With advance in modern technology, the gap between the Western world and the Islamic countries has been widening. This poses a dilemma for Islamic radicals who view Islamic religion and

⁸³³Robert, M. Jackson, ed., Global Issues, California, California State University, 1994, pp; 25-27.

⁸³⁴Robert, M. Jackson, ed., Global Issues, pp.25-27.

civilization as requiring divine work, dominance and conquest. To compensate, Muslim clerics relate to Western world with its successes in technology and its failures in some social moral standards as a real enemy of Islam and Muslims.⁸³⁵

Furthermore, conflict between the Arab and Western Civilizations could be explained in terms of the role played by the arms race. After World War II, the West became heavily dependent on the Arab States of the Persian Gulf for oil and energy. As a result, these countries became very rich and later when they decided to become “weapon-rich”; it provoked several clashes between them and the West. At this time the nuclear arms race was increasing in momentum between Western and Eastern Europe. The Islamic States equally wanted to become nuclear powers but the West was not comfortable with that because they feared the Islamic States would misuse the nuclear weapons. The West was therefore determined to do all they could to prevent the Islamic States from acquiring such weapons. This explains why the West attacked Iraq under Saddam Hussein, who was suspected of having such weapons and of course the conflict between America and Iran because Iran developed her own nuclear power plant⁸³⁶.

The last but not the least factor that fuelled the conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations has been the supremacy of Western culture over Islamic or Arab culture. The Western world believed that their culture or civilization was superior to any other civilization of the world. They therefore saw their civilization as one in which all the other civilizations should copy from. In the light of this view, Western Civilization has provided the most successful system for the fulfilment of the desires of mankind. More so, Western Civilization has been presented as that civilization that could manage the technological development and innovative scientific research required by the post industrial economy of the Islamic States. Thus, to these pundits the Western Civilization was the one true universal civilization to which

⁸³⁵P. S luglett and M. Farouk-Sluglet, *The Times Guide*, pp. 104-105.

⁸³⁶P. S luglett and M. Farouk-Sluglet, *The Times Guide*, pp. 104-105.

others had to draw from.⁸³⁷

However, these pundits failed to recognize that the Muslims have had a great civilization. By the 16th Century, Islamic Civilization was among the most important and widely spread civilizations on earth. During that era, Islamic scholars discovered logarithms and devised the decimal system. They made original discoveries in geometry, trigonometry and invented the Algebra, which itself is an Arabic word. In medicine, Muslim physicians demonstrated the circulation of blood in the body, developed the optic theory and published the first clinical account of small pox. Muslim astrologers seeking to fix time and direction of prayers developed the quadrants and made star chart. They were the first to use the magnetic needle in navigation. Muslims equally excelled in architectural techniques and their monuments provided the inspiration for some of Europe's cathedrals. But, as the West entered the age of enlightenment, industrial revolution, colonial domination and subsequent experiment at global scale; they came to challenge Islamic prominence, thereby leading to conflict between both civilizations.⁸³⁸

The Muslim intellectuals have reacted to this integration of world civilizations in a way that they greatly adhere to the teachings of the Koran, which holds that if Muslim societies have deviated from the straight path; they must return at once to the core values of their unadulterated principle of the religion. They were not to follow the prescribed nostrums; such as modernization, open door economic policy and democratization because their universal imperatives contradict those of Islam. The interaction between Islamic and Western Civilizations has produced violent conflicts between the Arab Countries and the USA representing the West and internal conflicts within the Arab States themselves.

⁸³⁷J. M. Roberts, *History of the World*, pp. 264-274.

⁸³⁸Sluglett and M. Farouk-Sluglett, *The Times Guide*, pp103-I05.

Consequences of the Conflict

One of the consequences of the conflict between Arab and Western Civilizations occurred in 1988 during the Lockerbie Incident. In 1988, Libyan terrorist by name EI-Megrahi bombed an air craft destined for the United States due to cultural clashes between Islam and Western Civilizations. In that incident more than one hundred American lives were consumed. EI-Megrahi is a Muslim radical who was against the American influence on Islam. Another consequence was the American pressure on the United Nations to authorize member states to use all means necessary to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. Thus, the coalition forces unleashed an awesome aerial bombardment of Iraq in 1991 during the Gulf War because of Saddam Hussein's refusal to withdraw his invasion of Kuwait. America used this incident to accuse Saddam of having Nuclear weapons. Saddam on his part linked the Gulf War with the Palestinian issue, offering to withdraw from Kuwait if Israel withdrew from occupied territories. This was to gain sympathy from his Arab brothers many of whom were against his invasion of Kuwait and had donated forces to the Coalition Force. Sad dam then called for a jihad against the enemies of Islam, condemning the stationing of non-Muslim troops on the sacred soil of Arabia.⁸³⁹

However transparent his manoeuvring and defiance of the United States was, nonetheless gained him some support in the Arab and Muslim World. This was so because no state gave him military support and even Arab States relatively well disposed to Iraq were unequivocal in their condemnation of Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. But when the extent of the determination of the United States to force Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait was made clear; Arab countries like Algeria, Jordan, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen and the Palestinian liberation Organization gave varying degree of moral support to Iraq. Meanwhile, Saddam retaliated to American led Coalition Force bombardment of Iraq by launching scud missiles against targets in Israel as mentioned before resulting to the death of fifteen Israelis in Tel Aviv. Therefore,

⁸³⁹Sluglett and M. Farouk-Sluglett, *The Times Guide*, pp. 105-107.

Saddam was seen as the Arab defender against Israel and the USA. It is worth mentioning too that the September 11, 2001 incident was a result of America's interference in the internal affairs of Arab States.⁸⁴⁰

Besides, the interaction of Arab and Western Civilizations has equally produced violent conflicts within the Arab States in the 21st Century leading to the ousting of Tunisian and Egyptian Presidents and many others declaring not to present their candidatures in future elections. The cases cited here are concerned with the recent wave of revolutions and uprisings that have taken place in North Africa and the Middle East since December 18, 2010. These revolutionary waves of demonstrations and protest was sparked off in Tunisia and caught fire in Egypt and Libya. There has equally been major protest in Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Oman and Yemen. Minor incidents have occurred in Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan and Syria. These protests have shared techniques of civil resistance in sustained campaigns and rallies, as well as the use of social media such as face book and twitter to organize, communicate, and raise awareness in the face of attempts at state repression and internet censorship. Numerous factors have led to the protest including dictatorship, human rights violations, governmental corruption, unemployment, increasing food prices and extreme poverty coupled with a large percentage of youth population. The outcome has witnessed a death toll of over 1,700-3,700 and self-immolation in 20 countries recording at least 9 deaths.⁸⁴¹

These events in North Africa and the Middle East give credence to Huntington's thesis expressed by Saddick M. Gouhar that "Islam's borders are bloody and so are its innards". Therefore, the reluctance of

⁸⁴⁰Andrew, Gavin Marshall, "Are We Witnessing the Start of a Global Revolution? North Africa and the Global Political Awakening Part 1," Global Research, 27 January 2011, Retrieved 28 February 2011; Ryan, "Comments on the Revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East, with Special Reference to Egypt," in Current Events, Foreign Policy and Politics, 30 January 2011, Retrieved 28 February 2011.

⁸⁴¹Saddick, M. Gouhar, "Modernist Arabic Literature and the Clash of Civilizations," Rupkatha Journal on International Studies in Humanities, Summer Issues, Volume I, N°. I, 2009, Retrieved 28 February 2011.

the Arabe/Islamic communities to absorb Western ideals and become part of a new global culture has produced internal strife in North Africa and the Middle East. The event again supports Huntington argument that "... the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and obsessed with the inferiority of their power". This explains the confidence of Western Civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superiority imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world.⁸⁴²

Conclusion

From the foregoing examination, it is worth noting that Arab and Western Civilizations possess distinctive features. It is equally important to note that these features have existed in the Arab and Western Civilizations from when these civilizations were conceived and have grown as such. Both the Arab and Western Civilizations have the tendency to spread and influence the other or even other civilizations. The Arab and Western Civilizations have, therefore, interacted at variant levels. Consequently, such interactions have produced conflicts due to the differences that exist between them. In some cases, the conflicts have resulted to violence. By and large, the conflict between Arab and Western Civilization could be summarized to be the effect of the West using international institutions, military power and economic resources in a way that will maintain Western predominance and interest as well as promote their values.

⁸⁴²Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale créée en 1983. Cette organisation géopolitique et économique regroupe 11 pays de la sous-région Afrique centrale à savoir: le Cameroun, le Gabon, le Tchad, la République centrafricaine, le Congo, la Guinée Equatoriale, le Rwanda, le Burundi, la République Démocratique du Congo, Sao Tome et Principe et l'Angola.

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La question des frontières du pré carre français face à la rivalité franco-américaine dans la sécurisation de 'Afrique centrale post guerre froide (1990-2004)

Par

Eric Wilson Fofack

Résumé

L'Afrique centrale apparaît depuis la fin de la guerre froide comme un champ de compétition sécuritaire entre les principales puissances de la communauté internationale à l'instar de la France et des Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Si la France a toujours évolué en toute quiétude dans cette sous-région pendant les périodes coloniale et post coloniale, il n'en est plus le cas depuis la fin de la guerre froide au début de la décennie 1990. Elle y est bousculée, à l'intérieur même de son pré carre par les Etats-Unis d'Amérique qui dans une logique de confirmation de leur statut de « Gendarme du monde », veulent bien imprimer leurs marques. Il s'en suit depuis lors une sorte de lutte de leadership pour la mise sur pied d'un plan de sécurisation d'une Afrique centrale très exposée aux conflits de tous genres. Pendant que la France propose le Programme de Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix (RECAMP), les Etats-Unis de leur côté pensent pouvoir trouver la panacée aux crises armées africaines à travers « l'African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance » (ACOTA). Entre 1990 et 2004, on aura donc observé entre la France et les Etats-Unis d'Amérique en Afrique centrale, une double conflictualité stratégique-sécuritaire sous fond de rivalité qui a amené à reconsidérer les frontières de ce que l'on peut appeler le pré carre français.

Mots clés: frontière, conflit, paix, sécurité, prévention, Afrique centrale.

Abstract

Central Africa since the end of the cold war is looked upon as a field of competition for security between the principal super powers of the international community, that is, France and the United State of America. If France has always reigned in absolute serenity in this sub region during the colonial and post-colonial periods, it is no longer the case since the end of the cold war in the early 90s(1990). It has been jostle inside the boundaries of his pré carré by the USA whom in a logic to confirm their status as “the gendarme of the world” wanted to instil their mark. Since then, there has been a struggle for leadership to put in place a security plan for Central Africa which is exposed to all sorts of conflicts. While France proposes «Renforcement des Capacités Africaines du Maintien de la Paix » (RECAMP), United States on her part thinks it has found the cure for African arm crisis through African Contingency Operation and Training Assistance (ACOTA). Between 1990 and 2004, we did observe in Central Africa, a dual, conflicting strategy to security which could oblige to reconsider the boundaries of the French pré carré.

Key words: boundary, conflict, peace, security, prevention, central Africa.

Introduction

La colonisation a donné les moyens à la France de faire de l'Afrique centrale ce que certains observateurs ont appelé l'un de ses «pré carres ». Les frontières de ce pré carre français ont toujours été clairement identifiées comme étant les mêmes que celles de la CEEAC⁸⁴³ avec la zone CEMAC⁸⁴⁴ comme point focal. Ainsi, la France a toujours régné sans partage dans cette sous-région en y

⁸⁴³Communauté Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale. Les pays de la zone CEMAC sont : le Cameroun, le Gabon, Le Tchad, la République centrafricaine, le Congo, la Guinée Equatoriale.

⁸⁴⁴Principalement entre les Etats-Unis et la France.

développant des politiques asymétries variables tant dans les domaines économique, politique que sécuritaire, Sur le plan sécuritaire notamment, la France semble depuis le début de la décennie 1990 bousculée dans cette Afrique centrale qui était jusqu'alors sa chasse gardée.

L'observation de la scène mondiale depuis la fin de la guerre froide et l'avènement du monde unipolaire révèle qu'il y a comme une duplication de l'histoire dont les dynamiques se situent en droite ligne de celles qui ont précédé la nouvelle ère. La période post-bipolaire, loin de marquer l'uniformisation des modèles de cohésion du monde occidental, a plutôt accentué les divergences du bloc occidental⁸⁴⁵ jusqu'alors minimisées par l'euphémisme des malentendus transatlantiques⁸⁴⁶. Celles-ci, en Afrique centrale, peuvent être relevées non seulement dans le sens adonner au monde, mais aussi dans des concurrences parfois violentes.

Ainsi, depuis la fin de la guerre froide, la France et les Etats-Unis sont de nouvelles puissances rivales en Afrique et principalement en Afrique centrale. Cela transparaît non seulement dans les différents projets de sécurisation (RECAMP, ACRI (ACOTA))⁸⁴⁷ que ces deux puissances ont élaborés pour le continent, mais aussi dans l'incursion que les Etats-Unis mènent à l'intérieur des frontières d'une ère géopolitique jadis domaine exclusif de la France. On peut aussi voir cette rivalité dans l'implication de ces deux puissances dans les différents conflits qui minent l'Afrique centrale depuis 1990.

⁸⁴⁵Y. A Chouala, «Désordre et ordre dans L'Afrique centrale actuelle' démocratisation, conflictualisation et transitions géostratégiques régionales», thèse de doctorat 3e cycle, IRIC, Yaoundé, 1999, p. 81. .

⁸⁴⁶RECA MP : Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix; ACRI: African Crisis Réponse Initiative ; ACOT A : African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance.

⁸⁴⁷P. Dabezles, «Le couple franco-américain en Afrique», in P.Ango Ela, (dir), La prévention des conflits en Afrique centrale. Prospective pour une culture de paix, Paris, Khartala, 2001, p. 81.

I-La rivalité franco-américaine en Afrique centrale

Il apparaît à maints égards que la rivalité franco- américaine en Afrique centrale, qui n'est effectivement pas une vue de l'esprit, résulte de la volonté de ces deux puissances de construire le monde et particulièrement l'Afrique à leur image. Traditionnellement, les deux pays ont en effet une idéologie messianique à prétention universelle, chacun pensant que ce qui peut arriver de mieux à quiconque c'est d'être français ou américain⁸⁴⁸.

1.1 Historique de la rivalité franco-américaine en Afrique.

La compétition ideologico-stratégique entre les Etats-Unis et l'Union Soviétique avait permis à la France de s'ériger en super puissance étrangère en Afrique. Cette posture stratégique révèle toute l'importance de l'Afrique pour les besoins de grandeur et de puissance de la France à l'échelle internationale. L'ahènement avec lequel la France s'est efforcée de se maintenir avec succès en Afrique ne trouve d'explication que dans le rôle qu'elle s'assigne aux yeux de l'Histoire⁸⁴⁹. Dans le même sens, elle a distendu les frontières de son pré carre traditionnel d'Afrique centrale vers les anciennes colonies de l'Espagne, du Portugal et de la Belgique que sont respectivement la Guinée équatoriale, l'Angola, La République Démocratique du Congo, le Rwanda et Le Burundi. L'obsession de la France ajouter les premiers rôles a fait de l'Afrique et particulièrement l'Afrique centrale un marchepied vers sa gloire mondiale. Seulement, ce schéma, s'il était toléré pendant la guerre froide, a dû subir des contestations, du fait des velléités impériales post-bipolaires des Etats-Unis.

En effet, «un empire n'a pas d'alliés, il n'a que des vassaux »⁸⁵⁰. En

⁸⁴⁸D. Bourmand, *La politique en Afrique*, Paris, Montehretlen, 1997, p. 103.

⁸⁴⁹I. Ramonet, «Vassalite », in *Le monde diplomatique*, n0583, octobre 2002, p. 1.

⁸⁵⁰P. Moreau-Desfarges, « Peut-on échapper à la mondialisation ? », in *Defense nationale*, 2001, p. 55. Cet autre affirme en effet que «tout empire se veut et se croit le monde».

se “voulant et se croyant le monde »⁸⁵¹, les Etats-Unis dans l’après-guerre froide ont élaborés une nouvelle politique stratégique reposant sur le concept de “*shaping* » qui cherche à taconner l’environnement international par la diffusion des normes, des valeurs et des standards de la présence américaine dans le monde⁸⁵². Cette posture stratégique post bipolaire s’accommode donc très mal, si non peu, des sanctuaires et même des espaces réservés. Lors d’une tournée en Afrique en 1996, Le Secrétaire d’Etat Warren Christopher déclarait que:

Tous les Etats doivent coopérer et non se faire concurrence, si nous voulons exercer une influence positive sur l’avenir de l’Afrique. Le temps est révolu ou l’Afrique pouvait être divisée en sphères d’influences et ou les puissances étrangères pouvaient considérer un groupe d’Etats comme leur domaine prive, Aujourd’hui, l’Afrique a besoin du soutien de tous ses amis et non pas de la protection exclusive de quelques-uns⁸⁵³.

La guerre froide finie, les Etats-Unis n’avaient plus à ménager leurs alliés et à rester en marge d’un continent de plus en plus peuplé, aux potentialités économiques grandes. Cette nouvelle orientation américaine ne pouvait coexister facilement avec celle de frontière ou de pré carré à la française. Cela laisse donc apparaître un conflit entre un conservatisme néocolonial, et un libéralisme tous azimuts post bipolaire qui inéluctablement ne peut conduire qu’à une reconsidération des limites territoriale du pré carré français en Afrique centrale comme illustrée par la carte ci-après.

Sur un tout autre plan, les Etats-Unis représentent en Afrique un cauchemar séculaire de la France: celui du monde anglo-saxon. En 1898 en *effet*, la France a perdu le Soudan face à la Grande Bretagne après une altercation entre les commandants des troupes coloniales des deux pays à Fachoda. Depuis lors, il est difficile de lire l’action de la

⁸⁵¹ N. Bagayoko, « La politique américaine de sécurité en Afrique subsaharienne sous le président Clinton », Afrique contemporaine, N°197, 2001, p.13.

⁸⁵² W. Christopher, cite par N. Bagayoko, “La politique américaine de sécurité... p.12.

⁸⁵³ Notamment l’Ouganda, l’Erythrée ou l’Ethiopie etc.

France en Afrique sans prendre en compte la composante anglophone de sa politique africaine. Les Etats-Unis, même s'ils ne font pas partie d'une organisation anglo-saxonne de type Commonwealth, représentent dans l'imaginaire français la Grande Bretagne à Fachoda. De cette perception découle une méfiance quasi-épidermique de la France vis-à-vis des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, En Afrique par exemple, les rapprochements entre les Etats-Unis et certains pays africains⁸⁵⁴, s'ils avaient pour objectif selon Washington d'isoler (en l'encerclant) le régime islamiste du Soudan, ont été perçus par les autorités françaises comme une « conspiration anglophone » contre laquelle le soutien aux régimes dictatoriaux de Mobutu et Habyarimana était une nécessité⁸⁵⁵.

Dans ce cadre général, la rivalité entre la France et les Etats-Unis est également observable à travers les programmes militaires sécuritaires que sont le RECAMP et l'ACRI (ACOTA).

1.2. RECAMP et ACRI (ACOTA) : des projets concurrents à l'intérieur des frontières d'un même espace géographique ?

Le RECAMP et l'ACRI (ACOTA), même s'ils marquent de manière objective le désengagement stratégique de la France et des Etats-Unis dans le maintien de la paix en Afrique, ont cependant des genèses différentes et des dynamiques propres.

Le programme RECAMP est issu des échanges de vues entre la France et ses partenaires africains, notamment lors du sommet franco-africain de Biarritz tenu en novembre 1994 et consacre spécifiquement aux questions de sécurité. A ce sommet, la France fit en effet sa toute première proposition pour la constitution d'une force africaine d'intervention. Les propositions du Président Eyadema⁸⁵⁶ du Togo enrichies de nombreuses autres consultations aboutirent au format final du RECAMP ; ce qui fit dire à Roland Adjovi que ce dernier est

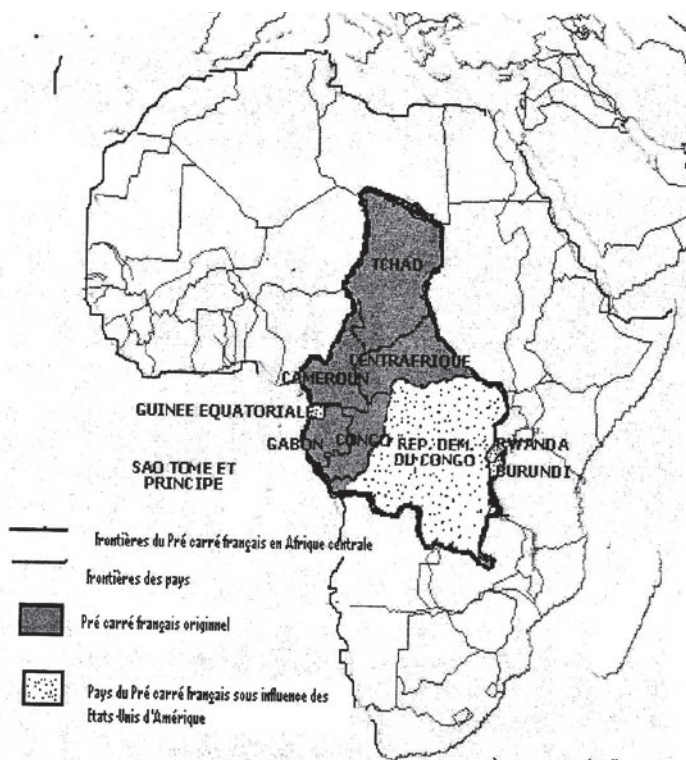
⁸⁵⁴C. Landsberg et F. Kornegay, "The western powers, South Africa and Africa. Burden Sharing, Burden Shift and Spheres of influence" <http://www.polis.Sciencepo-bordeaux.fr/vol14n2/anti.3.html>.

⁸⁵⁵A qui avait confié la construction du projet

⁸⁵⁶R. Adjovi, « Perspectives française et américaine de maintien de la paix en Afrique », <http://www.lafrique.free.fr/a-f/199916ra.htm>.

avant tout un projet politique⁸⁵⁷.

Carte : Les frontières du pré carre français en Afrique centrale



Source: Synthèse documentaire

Le programme RECAMP visait à renforcer les capacités africaines de maintien de la paix fondée sur le système des forces en attente de l'ONU. Il était question à travers ce programme de coordonner les besoins, les ressources, et faciliter l'établissement d'un partenariat entre les Etats membres qui mettent des contingents à disposition et ceux qui étaient en mesure de fournir des équipements et toute forme d'aide. Le système devait être bénéfique pour les Nations Unies en ceci qu'il devait leur permettre de s'attaquer au problème des besoins

⁸⁵⁷G. D e Belliscize, « Le maintien de la paix en Afrique: la France et le programme RECAMP» in Afrique ; contemporaine, n° 191, juillet-septembre 1999, p. 22.

(troupes, équipement, services, etc.), des temps de réponse, du niveau de préparation et de formation en favorisant une plus grande adéquation entre les capacités de formation et les besoins nationaux et régionaux.⁸⁵⁸ Dans ce cadre, la France devait instruire, entraîner et équiper en partie une capacité africaine de maintien de la paix, ceci sous l'égide des Nations Unies.

L'ACRI (ACOTA) d'inspiration américaine quant à lui est un projet militaire. Face aux crises burundaise et rwandaise, les militaires américains ont ardemment recherché les moyens d'intervenir sans s'engager une nouvelle fois dans une opération meurtrière de type « Restore Hope »⁸⁵⁹. C'est ainsi que l'idée d'une force africaine d'intervention est apparue comme la solution idéale. D'où la proposition de l'African Crisis Response Force" (ACRF) qui prévoyait la constitution d'une force interafricaine de maintien de la paix, formée d'environ 10 000 soldats africains, dirigée par des Africains, déployée sous l'égide des Nations Unies, équipée et financée par des donateurs américains et européens. Face aux réactions peu enthousiastes des pays africains et de certaines capitales européennes, et devant la difficulté fondamentale relative à l'utilisation de cette force en temps de paix, les Etats-Unis ont alors mis sur pied l'African Crisis Response Initiative » (ACRI).

Fidèles à leur culture de leadership, les Américains dans le cadre de l'ACRI ont envisagé la sécurité de l'Afrique en se fondant sur des Etats pivots (*Pivot States*) malgré le fait que certains de ces Etats pivots se trouvaient dans le pré carré français, Les Etats-Unis ont offert à l'Etat africain partenaire une formation aux Operations de Maintien de la Paix (OMP) en deux temps :

-la formation initiale qui porte essentiellement sur l'acquisition des connaissances militaires de base, le contact avec les réfugiés, l'interaction avec les organisations humanitaires et le respect des droits

⁸⁵⁸C'est le nom donné à l'opération onusienne de Somalie conduite en 1994 par les Etats-Unis. Au cours de cette opération, les troupes américaines ont été mises en déroute par les islamistes.

⁸⁵⁹P. A. Brahmavici, « Activisme militaire de Washington en Afrique », *Le monde diplomatique*, N°604, juillet 2004. p. 14.

de l'Homme. Ensuite, le programme ACRI a un suivi qui consiste en un programme d'initiation et de remise à niveau tous les six mois sur trois ans ;

- un volet équipement, notamment en matériel de communication et de défense.

Ce programme ACRI d'entraînement a été conçu pour développer des compétences militaires de base, renforcer la formation de combat et accroître les capacités des Etats-majors, sur la base du principe « Mini équipement, maxi entraînement - s'articulant autour de six axes : standardisation, interopérabilité, formation des instructeurs, transparence, soutien et travail d'équipe⁸⁶⁰. Il a été réorganisé selon la terminologie du Département d'Etat en «African Contingency Operations and Training Assistance» (ACOTA) en 2002.

La réorganisation de l'ACRI-ACOTA n'est pas aussi sans rapport avec la lutte globale américaine engagée depuis le 11 septembre 2001 contre le terrorisme international. Cette idée se renforce lorsqu'on prend en compte les propos tenus par le Président G. W. Bush en 2003 lors de sa tournée africaine: «Nous ne laisserons pas les terroristes menacer les peuples africains ni utiliser l'Afrique comme base pour menacer le monde ». Ces projets français et américain ont trouvé en Afrique centrale un terrain d'opérationnalisation,

Selon G. de Beliscize, « Le domaine de la prévention des conflits ou du renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix n'est pas un domaine de concurrence ou de compétition, mais au contraire, un domaine de concertation et d'actions complémentaires au bénéfice et selon les Vœux des partenaires »⁸⁶¹. Cette affirmation qui semble plus être un VCEU pieux ne fait pas ressortir ce qui se joue dans la sécurisation de l'Afrique. « C'est la confirmation des positions et des aires d'influence, et la conquête de nouvelles par des

⁸⁶⁰G. D e Belliscize, “ »Le maintien de la paix en Afrique ... », p. 22.

⁸⁶¹E. W. Fofack, «L'Organisation des Nations-Unies et la résolution des conflits armés de l'après-guerre froide en Afrique centrale: 1990-2004 », Thèse de Doctorat PhD en Histoire des Relations Internationale, Université de Yaoundé I, Yaoundé, 2008, p. 398.

mécanismes plus voilés que ceux des interventions directes⁸⁶²». En effet, la promotion de la paix et de la sécurité dans des aires géographiques régionales déterminées du globe doit également être perçue comme une politique dont l'objectif est la poursuite ou la réalisation de l'intérêt national des Etats les plus puissants composant le système. Ainsi, «élaboration des projets de sécurisation du continent africain par la France et les Etats-Unis, puissances désormais rivales en Afrique, apparaît comme une composante non négligeable de leur rivalité.

Le retour des Etats-Unis sur la scène géopolitique africaine par le truchement du domaine du maintien de la paix en 1996⁸⁶³ est venu bousculer les réflexions antérieures, largement menées par la France, sur la question. En s'opposant farouchement à l'idée américaine de constitution d'une force interafricaine, en particulier sur les délais de sa mise en place⁸⁶⁴, la France a voulu (dès l'annonce de l'ACRF) préserver les chances de participation des pays africains francophones à cette force et «couvrir en fait les modalités traditionnelles d'intervention française en Afrique»⁸⁶⁵. Cette opposition s'est également manifestée en rapport avec l'échelon de mobilisation d'une capacité africaine de maintien de la paix. Bien que l'ACRF soit devenue l'ACRI⁸⁶⁶, il est indéniable qu'il s'agit-là de deux visions opposées du continent. D'une part, les Etats-Unis ont pris l'option d'appliquer la politique des « bons élevés » ou « *pivot States* » (sur le plan 'stratégique de l'ACRI) par laquelle ils privilégiaient des relations avec certains pays africains «fréquentables» et sur lesquels ils appuient leur politique de rayonnement. D'autre part, la France, du fait d'un legs historique de fédérations coloniales, a pris l'option d'opérationnaliser le RECAMP

⁸⁶²A travers la proposition du projet de l'African Crisis Réponse Force (ACRF).

⁸⁶³Les Etats-Unis proposaient qu'elle soit immédiatement constituée pour une intervention au Burundi.

⁸⁶⁴C. Atlan et J. Lauseig, «Les approches françaises et américaines du maintien de la paix en Afrique », <http://www.polis.sciencepobordeaux.jrivo12n2larti4.html>.

⁸⁶⁵L'idée d'une force interafricaine permanente clam exclue.

⁸⁶⁶Il s'agit des Etats comme Le Sénégal, Le Gabon, Le Mali, et récemment Le Tchad dans Le cadre de l'Initiative Pan Sahel.

dans le cadre régional et sous régional. Ceci veut dire qu'en fait, en prenant un groupe d'Etats, la France se soucie moins que les Etats-Unis de la qualité politique de chacun d'eux, notamment en ce qui concerne les pratiques démocratiques.

A travers ces différentes approches, il y a comme une levée des frontières des zones traditionnelles d'influence. Les Etats-Unis collaborent en plus avec des Etats considérés comme ceux du pré carré français⁸⁶⁷ et s'investissent donc, à travers l'ACRI, dans les zones traditionnelles d'influence française. De la même manière, les différents exercices militaires organisés dans le cadre du RECAMP⁸⁶⁸ font ressortir une volonté française de conforter sa présence en Afrique noire francophone, et aussi d'étendre cette présence à des pays considérés comme ceux de la "renaissance" par les Américains⁸⁶⁹. Il apparaît donc que si le RECAMP et l'ACRI (ACOTA) ont pour ambition de doter le continent africain des capacités de renforcement du maintien de la paix, ils sont également des instruments d'une compétition de plus en plus explosive, entre les Etats-Unis et la France, notamment en Afrique centrale. Cela ne traduit plus seulement une intrusion des Etats-Unis dans le pré carré français, mais aussi une logique d'affirmation de puissance.

II- La logique d'affirmation de puissance

Le conflit de puissance entre les Etats-Unis et la France qui s'opérationnalise en Afrique centrale est observable à travers la minoration et l'instrumentalisation des Nations Unies en fonction des intérêts nationaux égoïstes. Elle s'observe également à travers l'investissement du champ de l'insécurité sous régionale sous le modelé de la sous-traitance conflictuelle par alliés régionaux interposés.

⁸⁶⁷C'est le cas de Guidimakha 1998 ou Gabon 2000.

⁸⁶⁸C'est aussi Le cas des exercices militaires Tanzanie 2002 pour les Etats de L'Afrique Orientale et Australe.

⁸⁶⁹Entretien avec J. R. Booh Booh, 72 ans environ, représentant spécial des Nations Unies au Rwanda au début du génocide, Yaoundé, 17 janvier 2008.

2.1. Rivalité franco-américaine et instrumentalisation/marginalisation des Nations Unies

L'ONU, pour se déployer dans la sécurisation de l'Afrique centrale, a besoin du mandat de ses Etats-membres et surtout de celui des cinq permanents du Conseil de sécurité. Or, "L'analyse permet de considérer toute participation des Etats aux organisations internationales comme relevant d'un jeu coopérant tendant à fondre dans un ensemble plus grand et plus efficace la quête de l'intérêt national et partant de la puissance⁸⁷⁰. Ainsi sont-elles perçues par les grandes puissances telles que la France ou les Etats-Unis. Ces Etats font usage de leur poids au sein de l'Organisation soit pour l'empêcher d'agir quand leurs intérêts sont en jeu, soit pour l'amener à agir dans le sens de la protection de ces intérêts.

En effet, les Etats détenteurs du droit de veto au sein de l'ONU font du mécanisme de maintien de la paix un instrument qu'ils utilisent pour rechercher l'avantage symbolique d'apparaître comme gardiens de l'éthique des relations internationales. Depuis 1990, ce sont ces deux précédés qui ont permis à la France et aux Etats-Unis de déterminer le déploiement de l'ONU sur la scène conflictuelle à sécuriser de l'Afrique centrale. On peut le voir à travers les exemples de l'opération Turquoise de 1994 et de l'intervention au Kivu en 1996.

En 1994, au plus fort moment du génocide rwandais, la France est accusée d'y jouer un rôle non négligeable. Cette dernière a pesé de tout son poids au sein du Conseil de sécurité pour faire adopter la résolution autorisant l'envoi d'une force multinationale au Rwanda avec pour mission d'assurer la protection et la sécurité des personnes déplacées. L'opération Turquoise est ainsi menée dans le Sud-Ouest du Rwanda afin de pouvoir créer un corridor de sécurité pour les réfugiés en direction de la République Démocratique du Congo (RDC, ex Zaire). Cet engagement français ne laisse aucun observateur indifférent puisque la France décide de fournir l'essentiel des troupes de l'opération Turquoise alors qu'elle ne s'était pas proposée pour en fournir à la MINUAR⁸⁷¹. Cette opération est en fait apparue comme le

⁸⁷⁰ Mission des Nations Unies au Rwanda créée en 1993 et qui s'est achevée en 1996,

⁸⁷¹ Habyarimana était considéré comme un allié indéfectible de Paris,

vern timer humanitaire de légitimation d'une stratégie de légitime défense.

Derrière les objectifs nobles de l'opération Turquoise, il s'agissait pour la France d'exfiltrer ses alliés locaux, anciens membres du régime d'Haoyanmane⁸⁷², vers l'Est du Zaïre, de ralentir l'avancée de l'armée tutsi et de maintenir la région sous influence française. C'est de cette manière que le Colonel Theoneste Bagosora a pu quitter le Rwanda. Il apparaît donc que sous le couvert de L'ONU, la France a poursuivi des intérêts égoïstes relatifs à sa présence en Afrique centrale, notamment la crainte de « perdre » le Rwanda.

Dans la même optique, les Nations Unies sont restées marginalisées face à la crise au Kivu du fait des mésententes franco-américaines relatives à la nécessité d'une intervention. L'afflux massif des réfugiés Rwandais à l'Est de la ROC en 1994 avait provoqué des troubles sociaux dans la région, nécessitant une intervention militaire des forces armées zaïroises. C'était là le début d'une crise militaro-humanitaire qui allait mobiliser la communauté internationale. Entre la création d'un couloir humanitaire et le désarmement des miliciens des camps de réfugiés, les Nations Unies ont, à travers les résolutions 1079 et 1080, donné les moyens aux pays volontaires pour mettre en œuvre une force militaire devant permettre aux Organisations humanitaires de secourir les réfugiés tout en facilitant leur retour « volontaire » au Rwanda.⁸⁷³ Seulement, l'attaque du camp de réfugiés de Mugunga le 15 novembre 1996, qui poussa environ 400 000 réfugiés à la frontière rwandaise, porta un coup décisif à la constitution d'une force multinationale. Arguant qu'il n'y avait plus de réfugiés à l'Est de la ROC, les États Unis considérèrent que l'intervention n'avait plus lieu d'être; ce qui aboutit à la mise à terme de la résolution 1080. Mais en réalité, qu'est ce qui se jouait autour de cette intervention?

Pour les États-Unis, une intervention extérieure aurait permis à plusieurs ex génocidaires et miliciens Rwandais se trouvant sur le sol zaïrois de pouvoir rentrer au Rwanda et d'y déstabiliser le régime Front Patriotique Rwandais (FPR). Elle aurait également surement ralenti ou

⁸⁷²C. Atlan et J. Lauseig «Les approches françaises et américaines du maintien de la paix. I »

⁸⁷³Y. A. Chouala, « Désordre et ordre dans l'Afrique centrale actuelle ... », p. 81.

bien hypothéqué la marche des mouvements rebelles vers la capitale Kinshasa, dont les autorités ne bénéficiaient plus du même capital de confiance à Washington. Par contre, pour la France, une intervention internationale aurait permis de sécuriser le retour de ses ex allées au Rwanda et de « sauver » le régime « ami » de Mobutu. Comme on le constate, l'ONU a été l'instrument d'une rivalité dans une Afrique centrale de plus en plus instable du fait même de cette rivalité.

2.2. Rivalité franco-américaine et développement de l'insécurité sous régionale : l'hypothèse d'une "guerre froide à l'occidentale" validée

En 1999, Y.A.Chouala écrivait que « ce qui se joue dans le chamboulement conflictuel en cours en Afrique du centre, c'est la projection périphérique d'une concurrence occidentale (entre les Etats-Unis et la France) sans pitié et explosive⁸⁷⁴ ». Il émettait alors l'hypothèse d'une « guerre froide à l'occidentale » se déroulant dans l'espace centre africain, à l'intérieur des frontières du pré carre français.

Cette hypothèse, empiriquement, trouve des éléments de validation. En effet, les Etats-Unis et la France, dans leur rivalité au sujet de l'Afrique, ont développé les mêmes stratégies que pendant la guerre froide à savoir, la sous-traitance conflictuelle, le renforcement de la coopération militaire, etc. J. E. Pondi parle pour sa part d'une « nouvelle dynamite entre les deux pays »⁸⁷⁵. Ainsi, les Etats-Unis ont dans le cadre du génocide rwandais, apporte un soutien logistique et technique aux troupes de l'Armée Patriotique Rwandaise (APR) en Ouganda. Face à la crainte que constituait le FPR⁸⁷⁶, la France a renforcé ses liens militaires avec le régime militaire du général Habyarimana. L'intervention française auprès du gouvernement en place alors au Rwanda est même allée au-delà des accords de

⁸⁷⁴J. E. Pondi, « Français et américains en Afrique noire: nouvelle dynamite? », Afrique 2000, 2001, pp. 49-56.

⁸⁷⁵Le F PR était constitué de Tutsis rwandais réfugiés en Ouganda qui avaient poussé la félonie au point de parler anglais.

⁸⁷⁶W. Mvomo Ela, « Petro stratégie et appels d'empire dans le golfe de guinée », in Enjeux, N°22, 2005, p.12.

coopération militaire de 1975⁸⁷⁷; ceci ne peut s'expliquer que par l'affaiblissement du pouvoir en place et surtout par la valeur du Rwanda dans la stratégie militaire de la France en Afrique. La volonté française de garder le control du Rwanda pourrait partir du projet de trouver un nouveau site de pré positionne mérite de ses troupes⁸⁷⁸ dans l'Est du pays. Créer un «porte avion fixe »aux abords du Zaïre aurait permis de surveiller les « marches de l'Afrique Australe » et de continuer à servir de relais vers l'océan indien⁸⁷⁹? De ce fait, le déroulèrent du génocide était une excroissance de la compétition entre la France et les Etats-Unis. Divers éléments permettent aujourd'hui de penser que même après me génocide, la France a organisé une formation militaire, donnée par des cadres militaires et miliciens hutus extrémistes rwandais et burundais. Des attaches militaires français avalent également été envoyés depuis Paris et Kinshasa par Goma et Bukavu⁸⁸⁰.

De la même manière, durant le premier conflit de RDC, les soutiens français au président Mobutu et américains à L. D. Kabila sont des faits avérés. Bien des analyses et inquiétés montrent aujourd'hui le degré très considérable de l'implication américaine dans le théâtre des opérations amorcées par L. D. Kabila lors de la guerre de libération de 1997. Les Américains ont appuyé sur le plan militaire et stratégique l'offensive des brigades internationales tutsies venues d'Ouganda et du Rwanda. Sur le plan diplomatique, ils ont accompagné l'affaiblissement et les délégitimassions internationales du pouvoir du maréchal Mobutu. Par ailleurs, il convient de relever l'action néfaste sur le plan sécuritaire de certains Etats, partenaires des initiatives américaines en matière sécuritaire en Afrique centrale, notamment celles de l'Ouganda. On aurait en effet pu espérer que les Etats devant servir de pivot dans la mise en place de l'ACRI soient des

⁸⁷⁷Ceci en cas de perte de Djibouti ou de la Centrafrique.

⁸⁷⁸A. Dumoulin, *La France militaire et l'Afrique. Coopération et interventions. Un euu des lieux*, GRIP/Editions Complexes. Bruxelles, 1997, p.15.

⁸⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁸⁰Le Tchad participe activement sur le plan militaire a l'initiative Pan Sahel des Etats-Unis dans la lutte contre le terrorisme.

exemples de bonne conduite sur la scène internationale. Cependant, on constate que tous ceux qui ont bénéficié de l'ACRI ne sont pas toujours « propres », L'Ouganda, malgré sa participation à l'ACRI, contribue en même temps à l'insécurité de la sous-région en utilisant parfois le matériel issu de la coopération militaire avec les Etats-Unis. Il a soutenu Le FPR contre le général Habyarimana, l'AFDL contre le maréchal Mobutu ; il s'est aussi opposé au Rwanda à Kissangani en RDC en 1999 et manifeste une volonté expansionniste, véritable facteur de l'insécurité régionale. Ce qui montre qu'il existe une certaine autonomie des relais régionaux des puissances extérieures dont les intérêts et les préoccupations ne coïncident que très rarement avec ceux de leurs « tuteurs ».

Ceci nous amène à évoquer, dans la logique de validation de l'hypothèse de la guerre froide à l'occidentale, le phénomène de la « satellisation » des Etats de la sous-région par les deux « grands ». Les cas de l'Ouganda et du Rwanda ont d'ores et déjà été relevés. Mais en plus, L'intrusion des Etats-Unis d'Amérique à l'intérieur des frontières du pré carré français a également inscrit dans leur champ de convoitise les Etats tels que Sao Tome et Principe, le Tchad⁸⁸¹ ou encore la Guinée Equatoriale. Aussi, les gouvernements du Cameroun, du Gabon et de la Guinée Equatoriale ont-ils conclu avec le gouvernement des Etats-Unis, des accords qui autorisent l'utilisation des installations aéroportuaires desdits pays par les forces américaines⁸⁸², apparaît donc que la concurrence intense entre les Etats-Unis et la France tend à transformer le champ traditionnel d'exercice d'influence du second en un champ d'intérêts du premier. De ce point de vue, la délimitation des frontières du pré carré français en Afrique centrale devient un exercice plus que jamais fastidieux.

⁸⁸¹C. D. Awoumou, « Le golfe de guinée face aux convoitises », in Enjeux, janvier-mars 2005, p. 13.

⁸⁸²Il s'agit du Congo, du Gabon et du Cameroun; on se souvient que la compétition entre compagnies française et américaine a joué un rôle dans le déclenchement de la guerre au Congo en 1997.

Conclusion

Au terme de cette étude, on peut conclure à une reconfiguration stratégique de l'Afrique centrale du fait de la forte pénétration de Washington dans la sous-région. Cette pénétration suscite une reconsidération des frontières de la zone française d'Afrique centrale. Pour cela, les allées traditionnelles de la France sont de plus en plus soit cernées soit nappées dans la maille américaine. Ainsi, le Cameroun, le Gabon, le Congo, la RCA sont entourés par la Guinée Equatoriale, l'Angola, le Rwanda et le Tchad. Ceci est consors par un ensemble de visites des responsables américains dans ces pays. A titre illustratif, le secrétaire d'Etat Colin Powell était en Angola et au Gabon en 2002; le général Charles F. Wald, commandant adjoint de *l'European Command* (EUCOM) était en tournée au Gabon, en Angola et à Sao Tome et Principe en 2003. “ Y a donc de plus en plus une américanisation, néfaste pour la France, de l'Afrique centrale.

Bien plus, la « gourmandise » américains vis-à-vis du pétrole a amené les Etats-Unis à investir le domaine quasi traditionnel d'exploitation de la France⁸⁸³. De même, les nombreuses possibilités sur les plans miniers et plus globalement économiques, ont contribué à un enchevêtrement des intérêts de ces puissances qui, en se télescopant, transforment l'Afrique centrale en un terrain hautement conflictogène. Et à l'heure actuelle, on ne saurait estimer les conséquences néfastes qui découleraient de la persistance d'une telle situation. L'Afrique centrale reste donc un enjeu important des relations internationales de l'après-guerre froide. Or qui dit enjeu dit également potentiel conflit autour de cet enjeu. De ce fait, l'Afrique centrale, bien que soutenue par la communauté internationale, reste un espace fortement instable.

⁸⁸³ We acknowledge the invaluable assistance from and express special thanks to Dr. Willibroad Dze-Ngwa relative to the historical data used in this essay. Plato, *The Republic* 2nd ed. Harmondworth: Penguin Books, 1955, 17.

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Contemporary Historical Reality as Source and Beneficiary of the Popular Song in Post-Independent Cameroon

By
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Abstract

The relationship between literature, history and society has long been established by the Classics such as Plato, Aristotle. Aristotle in *The Poetics* while acclaiming poetry above history, distinguished the latter as dealing with the particular and the former as dealing with the universal. This distinction consists in the methods of these art forms. Bearing in mind that history is part of society and that these two are literary quarrels, new historicism approach has been employed in this study. The study tentatively concludes that while history remains the reservoir of creative imagination, what Prince Panya looks for in history, is not so much the truth as the fiction. Through allusion to place names and historical personages, particular historical events and incidents are brought to light. The poet's varying attitudes to historical incidents are expressed through humour, sarcasm, irony, metaphor and contrast in order to transform historical reality into poetry (music).

Keywords: Contemporary, Historical Reality, Source, Beneficiary, Popular Song and Post-Independent.

Introduction

This chapter sets out to examine the relationship between contemporary history and Prince Panya's popular song (Poetry); the extent to which this artist uses names and events from history as

handmaiden for poetic vision; as well as the devices he utilizes in transforming history into poetry.

The relationship between history and poetry (Literature) has long been established by the classics such as Plato and Aristotle. In *The Poetics*, Aristotle while acclaiming poetry above history, distinguished the latter as dealing with the particular and the former, with the universal. This distinction consists in the methods of these art forms.⁸⁸⁴

During the neo-classical period, Sir Phillip Sidney in “Defence of Poesy” set the poet apart from other artists - the Philosopher and the historian. Whereas the knowledge of the philosopher borders on the abstract and the general, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be, but to what is, to the particular truth of the things. Like Aristotle, Sidney rated poetry above philosophy and history in method; for reason that whatever the historian and philosopher said should be done the poet gives a perfect picture of it in someone by whom he presupposed it was so; so the poet couples the general notion with the particular example.

Besides, both History and Poetry share common reservoir of source materials in contemporary reality, but what the historian looks for in history is different from what the poet looks for. Whereas the historian looks for the truth in history, the poet looks for fiction, using the narration as handmaiden for creative imagination. It is Sidney who aptly summarizes this view in the following argument:

... as in history, looking for truth they go away full fraught with falsehood, so in poesy, looking for fiction, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention.⁸⁸⁵

This study, therefore, hopes to study how Prince Panya’s popular song titled “Conference Nationale” transforms facts from historical

⁸⁸⁴Sir Philip Sidney, “Defence of Poesie” in *The Oxford Anthology of English literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, 644.

⁸⁸⁵Edgar V. Roberts, *Writing Themes about Literature*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964; 57

reality into poetry.

Edgar V Roberts in *Writing Themes about Literature* argues that “though most literary artists aim at universality, they are also men of their time and most of their subjects are contemporary”⁸⁸⁶. This implies that the historical setting of the literary piece is quite relevant in its understanding. Roberts further distinguished between literature and history when he argues:

Whereas history is concerned with general actions of a society, literature presents specific actions of people living in that society and records their problems, their ways of meeting them, their failures, their successes and their dreams.⁸⁸⁷

History, therefore, is different from literature as it tells you what has happened while literature tells you what is and what ought to be. History is very important in life and creative writing in general, for as George Nyamndi rightly contends:

... a projection into the future is another way of returning to the past. Is the future not shaped by the past? That is why to travel into the future, we must first return to the past, the better to arm ourselves with the mental and moral strength required for the onward march.⁸⁸⁸

That is why the literary artist, in order to better express what is happening in the society or to forecast what can happen in the future, must return to the past for inspiration. There must, therefore, be retrospection in life generally, for prospection to effectively take place. In line with this view, Bate Besong in “Literature in the Season of the Diaspora: Notes to the Anglophone Cameroonian Writer” submits “... the yeast of history, above all, as a creative resource can never be far

⁸⁸⁶Ibid, 58

⁸⁸⁷George Nyamndi, *Whether Losing, Whether Winning*. Buea; 1

⁸⁸⁸Bate Besong, “Keynote Address” in Lyonga et al (eds) *Anglophone Cameroon Writings* Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth, 1993: 15.

from the troubadour's mind. A writer, who has no sense of history is like a sparrow without wings ... in fact, [he is like] the Aesopian lion devoid of claws and teeth".⁸⁸⁹ From the forgoing submissions, this writer makes bold to submit that good literature, most of the time, is the fictionalization of concrete historical evidence.

In his "Popular Song as a Vehicle for Social and Political Commentary in Post-Colonial Cameroon", Henry K. Jick argues that when Longue Longue and Prince Afo-A-Kom, comment on the "big social and political issues", of their society, it is their attempt to redirect the conscience of their listeners/audience towards "a higher awareness if their society must be developed".⁸⁹⁰

In recognition of the foregoing contention, we concede to Apegba Ker's argument in his "Song, Music and Dance as Instruments of Political Violence in Tivland of Benue State, Nigeria" that:

In a developing society like Nigeria, it is important to acknowledge the contributions of all citizens to the development of the society. The artist can also contribute his quota either through the way he writes and arouses the consciousness of the citizens or, as an oral artist, through his songs on various international interests.⁸⁹¹

This argument leads this critic to support O.O. Olatunji's view that the artist must be in the forefront of those who are causing progressive change in Africa.... This is one way in which he can demonstrate immediately his relevance to his people⁸⁹².

Art, in general, and poetry in particular, must therefore, be put in

⁸⁸⁹Henry Kah Jick, "Popular Song as a Vehicle for Social and Political Commentary in Post-Colonial Cameroon" in *Epasa Moto*.Vol. 3. No.2. 2008:7.

⁸⁹⁰Apeg ba Ker, "Song. Music and Dance as Instruments of Political Violence in Tivland of Benue State. Nigeria" in *Epasa Moto*.Vol.4. No.1.2009: 8.

⁸⁹¹Olat unji, *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press Ltd, 1984: 10.

⁸⁹²Kashim Ibrahim Tala and Henry K. Jick, "Lapir de Mbanga and Political Vision in Contemporary Cameroon" in *Lapai Journal of Humanities*.Vol2. No.1. 2008: 35.

the service of social, economic and political reconstruction of the society. Literature is fashioned, therefore, from societal happenings. Since literature draws its inspiration from society, which involves its history, the blend between history and literature is indispensable for the understanding of literary works. Prince Panya's "Conference Nationale" is going to be used in this study to defend the foregoing contentions about the role and functions of literature in a changing society like Cameroon.

When Prince Panya draws his inspiration from contemporary African historical realities as they affect Africa and his Cameroonian society in particular, it is because he is committed to his society and as such, hopes to contribute to its development. As an agent of social Change in society, therefore, the poet or oral singer is able to say what many members of his society cannot say. This essay hopes to corroborate the foregoing submissions.

Scope of Study

Kashim Ibrahim Tala and Henry Kah Jick in 2008 argued that:

The importance of popular music as a powerful and flexible vehicle for political communication explains why the landscape of popular music in Cameroon is vast and is peopled by such popular musicians such as Tala Andre Marie, Donny Elwood, Longue Longue, Prince Afo-A-Kom, Lapiro de Mbanga, John Minang, Saint Bruno and Ben Zama.⁸⁹³

In spite of these many artists in the society and for the purpose of this study, we will limit our analysis to one artist, Prince Panya, who is not even mentioned in the excerpt quoted above, but, who is one of the most eloquent commentators of the political history of Africa. This artist has the following songs to his credit: 'Conference Nationale', 'Anatole', 'Mangambeu', 'On Rit, On Pleure', 'Tchap Sam', 'Mendu Ngwala', 'Moto Clando' and 'Pierrot Tchana'. However, this essay is

⁸⁹³Peter Barry. *Beginning Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1995. 175.

going to use excerpts from “Conference Nationale”, the song that brought him to public notice in 2006 to illustrate its thesis. The song is presented in its entity in the appendix.

The Artist

Nothing is known about Prince Panya’s early or later years. All we could get about him is that he was born and brought up in Nkongsamba by parents who originated from the West Region of Cameroon. He came to the limelight in 2006 with the release of the album “Conference Nationale” containing the song under reference. His brand of music falls within the ‘Bend-Skin’ genre of Cameroonian popular music.

Methodology

We first watched this song on television (Canal 2) in 2009. Having been motivated by the lyrics and rhythm of the song, one set out to search for its video CD. We acquired this CD late in 2009. The song as presented above is contained in a CD titled “Folklore Video”. This video has the songs of the following artists: Tala Jeannot, Andre Marie Tala, Tapros, Tamwo Isidore, Prince Panya, Saint Bruno, Keng Godefroy, Prince Kestang and Berthym. Mindful of the fact that it is best to be a participant observer in oral performances if such data have to be collected for study, we had only to watch the CD in order to put the data under reference in writing since we could not meet the artist for any Jive performance. The fact that 98% of the song is rendered in French posed very little problem in understanding it.

No single literary approach can effectively be used to appropriately study any oral piece of literature in one given time. However, in order to achieve the objectives of this study, neohistoricism will be emphasized. This approach is primarily appropriate because it is interested in how history or the past is interpreted in literary works by reading non-literary works. Secondly, neo-historicism cuts across other disciplines like culture, sociology, linguistics, philosophy and anthropology. Since popular song is part and parcel of a people’s

popular culture, new historicism becomes very appropriate in its study.

The interpretation of history in literary works involves re-situating and remaking it so that a new entity is formed since history tends to be remade. This is justified when Peter Barry argues that “new historicism constitutes another remaking, another permutation of the past”⁸⁹⁴. While interpreting the historical reality in the song under reference, particular attention is going to be paid to the context, form and the thematic concerns therein.

Pragmatic functionalism is also going to be employed in order to highlight the lessons from and the relevance of the themes that the singer hopes to communicate to his audience. This is because this study also hopes to reiterate the fact that oral literature is always produced or performed for a purpose. In this case, it is not only the theme of pleasure that Prince Panya’s song treats but it attacks individuals, communities or institutions hoping to change society for better, and consequently, contributes to nation building or meaningful development of the society.

Analysis of Song

It is always advisable to begin the interpretation of any poem or song by attempting to decode its title. The title of the song under reference is “Conference Nationale”. This title comes from a Cameroonian contemporary historical reality. In his book, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon*, A.N.T. Mbu submits:

During the political upheavals in Cameroon in the early 1990s, frontline opposition political party leaders like Ni John Fru Ndi, Gustav Essaka and Dika Akwa, in the First Coordination Meeting of the Opposition Political Parties, called for “a National Conference” and later “a Sovereign National Conference” to correct the wrongs of the over thirty years of one party dictatorship. They argued that such a conference should be placed

⁸⁹⁴A.N. T. Mbu, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon*. Bamenda: Imprimerie Georges et Frères: 1993,179-183

under a provisional Government...⁸⁹⁵

From this title, one can therefore, make bold to contend that the meaning of this song is to be gleaned from the knowledge of the history surrounding these events and personages or time frame.

The African history under review here begins principally with that of colonization, which, in turn, provoked constant struggles of the people for justice, the rise of nationalist movements and militant agitation for independence. Slavery, colonization and neo-colonialism are considered in this poem (song) as agents of destruction. These themes will be discussed and illustrated subsequently.

The theme of colonialism has been quite persistent in African Literature. Till date, many African artists have given and still give so much importance to this external force, which has changed the pattern of life in Africa, in the belief that most of the conflicts between individuals and societies have been generated by it. The poet-singer begins his song with a call to reason

L'heure de la sagesse a sonne
C'est l'heure de l'intelligence – oh!
Africains devenons sage

Prince Panya in these opening lines is inviting Africans to be wise and not to be deceived again as was done by the imperialists who assassinated the following African patriots, who spearheaded anti-imperialist struggles for independence: Ruben Um Nyobe, Patrice Lumumba, Ernest Ouandie, Steve Biko, and Kwame Nkrumah, assassinated.

By alluding to these historical personages, the poet conjures up the historical events or incidents surrounding them. In the excerpt above, we discover that although the events recaptured span many years and concern about four African countries, the poet, though seeking for fiction in history, avoids details of historical narration, which is the realm of the historian. He achieves poetic laconic precision and

⁸⁹⁵Wikipedia, of 20103/2010.

conciseness through allusion to these historical names. The full meaning of the poem must then rely on knowledge of the following historical facts about these personages.

Ruben Mpodol Um Nyobe was the first Cameroonian revolutionary leader of the Nationalist Militant Party; Union Populations du Cameroun (UPC). He was betrayed by some of his members and assassinated by the French genocidal forces in September 1958 without Cameroon having attained independence.

Patrice Lumumba (2 July 1925 - 17 January 1961) was a Congolese nationalist and the first elected Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo (Belgian Congo) under President Joseph Kasavubu. Lumumba was charged for embezzlement of Post Office funds in 1955, but was released in 1956 when he returned the funds. In 1958, he helped in the formation of the Mouvement National Congolaise (MNC) and later became its president. He fought for and achieved the independence of the Congo on the 30 June 1960. Barely two months and two weeks (10 weeks) in office, Lumumba's government was overthrown during the Congo Crisis. He was arrested, imprisoned and subsequently, murdered with the complicity of the Belgian and US governments on January 17, 1961.⁸⁹⁶

Kwame Nkrumah: 21 September 1909 - 27 April 1972. He took a B.A. degree from Lincoln University in 1939, an M.A. in Education in 1942 and an M.A. in Philosophy in 1943. He later was President of African Students in the US and Canada. He returned to Ghana in 1947 to start the independence struggle of Ghana. He considered his return as a chance to fulfil the aims of the Pan-African Congress of 1945, which he had helped to organise in Manchester (Shillington 337). In February 1948, members of the United Gold Coast Convention of Dr. Joseph Danquah where Nkrumah was Secretary General, protested in demand to increase the number of elected rather than nominated African members of government; Nkrumah and others were arrested and imprisoned, but the protest showed the power of mass action as

⁸⁹⁶Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1995, 337.

the British government was forced to review the 1946 constitution.⁸⁹⁷

When Nkrumah was released, he founded a more radical party, the Convention People's Party (CPP), which stood for immediate independence. He called for "Positive Action" (demonstrations including civil disobedience, non-cooperation, boycotts and strikes) in order to achieve his aims. From February 5-10, 1951, the British government organized elections and though in jail, Nkrumah's CPP won a landslide victory. Nkrumah was released from prison on February 12 and made leader of Government Business and he presented his "motion of Destiny" to the Assembly requesting for independence as soon as the necessary Constitutional arrangements were made. In March 1957, Ghana became the first independent state in Sub-Saharan Africa with Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister.⁸⁹⁸

The following things led to Kwame Nkrumah's downfall: In 1958 he introduced laws, which restricted freedoms in Ghana. He then enacted the "Preventive Detention Act" which gave him powers to arrest and detain those against him.

In 1961, he ordered the arrest of striking railway workers. In 1964, he made himself president for life. All these raised widespread dissatisfaction to Nkrumah. In February 1966, while he was on a state visit to North Vietnam, he was overthrown by a military coup backed by the CIA. Nkrumah then lived in exile in Conakry (Guinea) and President Ahmed Sekou Touré, made him honorary President of Guinea.⁸⁹⁹

From the foregoing historical account of Kwame Nkrumah, one can argue with no fear of contradiction that the allusion to this historical personage demonstrates that the poet under reference in this study is concerned with contemporary African history. In this light therefore Panya's concern with contemporary African history spans through almost four hundred years of European imperialism; ranging from the exploration to the phase of the Partitioning of the African

⁸⁹⁷Ibid, 337

⁸⁹⁸Wikipedia, of 2010312010.

⁸⁹⁹Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty years of Independence*. London: Free Press, 2006, 418.

continent; from slavery experience through colonization up to the phase of the struggle for independence by African states as will be demonstrated below.

The month of August 1970 was particularly eventful in Cameroon. While 19 August 1970 witnessed the arrest of Ernest Ouandie, the successor of Ruben Um Nyobe, the 28th day of the same month saw that of Bishop Albert Ndongmo. Ernest Ouandie was then President of the Revolutionary Committee of the UPC (Union des Populations du Cameroun) political party. The revolutionary president was accused of plotting against the Head of State, Ahmadou Ahidjo and his government. Ernest Ouandie was found guilty and condemned to death and, consequently, shot at Bafoussam on the 15 January 1971. The next African nationalist referred to in the early part of Prince Panya's song is Steve Biko.

Born on December 18, 1946, Steve Biko (Stephen Bantu Biko) died on 12 September, 1977 in a Pretoria prison. He was the founder of the "Black Consciousness Movement to fight against white domination in South Africa. In 1972, he abandoned his medical studies to become full time activist against apartheid. According to him, black oppression was first and foremost a psychological problem, which must be countered by promoting black awareness, black pride, black capabilities and black achievement. In 1973, Biko was restricted to his hometown of King Williams's town in the Eastern Cape. He was forbidden to speak in public or to write for publication, to be quoted and to be present with more than one person at a time. Over a three-year period, he was arrested and detained twenty nine times.⁹⁰⁰

This allusion to Steve Biko, a South African nationalist, supports the theme of africanization, which other artists in Cameroon have treated and continue to treat in their songs or poems. In Longue Longue's "Ayo Africa" African patriots are constantly addressed. Henry Jick made this observation in 2008. When the poet calls on these patriots, he seems to be inviting or calling on his audience to draw inspiration from these names and fight too for their rights.

⁹⁰⁰Henry K. Jick, "Popular Songs as a Vehicle for Social and Political Commentary in Post-Colonial Cameroon" in *Epasa Moto* Vol.3, No.2 (2008): 7.

Stylistically, these names are symbols in Africa's political history and represent genuine patriotism for one's nation. Henry Jick in 2008 argued that these names remind most nationalistic Africans in general of patriots who fought against the imperialists in Africa and were killed during the process.⁹⁰¹ According to Prince Panya, the imperialists assassinated these patriots.

After having presented Africa as his major subject at the start of his song, Prince Panya returns to contemporary Cameroonian historical reality.

Pour ce qui concerne le Cameroun
1960 oh!! C'était l'année de l'indépendance
Deux Etat Fédères
Deux Premier Ministres
Ahmadou Ahidjo était à l'Est
John Ngu Foncha était à l'Ouest
Le république fédéral oh!

Historically, the much-desired independence was finally attained by the French Cameroon on 1 January, 1960. 1 October, 1961 marked the birth of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The Northern portion of the former British Cameroons was attached to Nigeria on 1 June, 1961 as Sardauna Province. Following the unification exercise, Cameroun Republic took the name of East Cameroon while the former British Cameroons became West Cameroon. This new association called for a Federal system of government in view of the differences between the administrative, economic, linguistic and cultural experiences of each of the territories involved. And so was born the Federal Republic of Cameroon as expressed in the excerpt quoted above. The Federal Constitution provided that the President and the Vice were not to come from the same state. Ahidjo (from East Cameroon) was President while Foncha (from West Cameroon) was Vice-president.

The poet speaks about this era of Cameroon with nostalgia and

⁹⁰¹Kashim Ibrahim Tala and Henry K. Jick, "Lapir de Mbanga and Political Vision in Contemporary Cameroon" in Lapai Journal of Humanities.Vo1.2. No.1.2008: 35.

affection. Implicitly, the poet here is praying for a return to federalism with a President and Vice as was prescribed by the then Federal Constitution.

Le Cameroun est unifié
Ahmadou Ahidjo est Président
John Ngu Foncha, Vice-Président
C'était trop fort!
C'était trop dur!
C'était le Cameroun en fer
Ce n'était pas le Cameroun en bois

The poet (singer) concedes that this Federal System was strong and symbolically was iron and not wood. The use of this contrast between iron and wood is a beautiful device to highlight the strength of the Federal System of Government and its constitution. The poet's message here seems to be that federalism is better than the present centralized system of government. It is therefore, the use of this contrast that Prince Panya emphasizes his poetic vision on the strength of the Federal System of government and announces the coming of weak Cameroon in the image of "Le Cameroun en bois"

Dix ans plus tard
Changement de politique Yaoundé
Au revoir le Nord
Bonjour le Sud
Au revoir Mohammed
Bonjour Jésus
Au revoir gandaïra
Bonjour la veste avec la cravate
C'était trop beau
C'était trop tôt
Le langage avait change
C'était la moralisation
Deux ans plus tard
Coup d'état manque Yaoundé

Not particularly interested in historical details, Prince Panya explores to great poetic effect, in allusion and symbols, the change of power from President Ahidjo to President Paul Biya in 1982. Ahidjo originated from the North of Cameroon and Biya is from the South. Mohammed is a symbol of Islam while Jesus Christ symbolizes Christianity. The *gandaura* is the traditional or habitual outfit of the Moslems of the North of Cameroon while the coat and tie symbolize the westernized South Cameroonian, who, is mostly in a coat and tie as formal dress. On 6 April, 1984, barely two years in office, President Biya faced an attempted coup d'état masterminded by mostly soldiers of the Grand North origin. The loyalist troops of the government, over-powered these rebels and, it is after this attempted coup plot that the artist under reference in this study argues:

Après cela mes chers amis
Ça a commencé à chauffer

Things indeed, became tough as the poet says, things became 'hot' and we are led into the hot political manoeuvres of Cameroonian politicians. This part of the song seems to be a lamentation over the game of politics played in Cameroon. The disillusionment of the Cameroonian people at the failure of the too many politicians to live up to the expectation of their avowed messianic mission is aptly expressed in the language and sarcasm that the poet uses when he describes them. As an oral artist, who is conscious of the role of his audience, he constantly refers to them in order to draw their attention and sympathy to what he is saying or intends to say. He frequently addresses them as follows:

“... mes chers amis”

This approach is to establish himself as the spokesperson of the audience as well as to win their support and sympathy for what he is criticizing in his poem (song).

En 1988
 John Fru Ndi à Bamenda
 Suffer don Finish
 Adamou Ndam Njoya dans le Noun
 Le berceau de l'humanité
 Hameni Bieleu à Bafang
 Le Nelson Mandela Camerounais
 Dika Akwa est à Douala
 Il s'est dirigé comme Président National de L'UPC
 Oh! Le Parti de Um Nyobe
 Ernest Ouandie
 Felix Moumie
 C'est le parti du crabe

Tala and Jick have argued that the wind of democratic change, which swept through the African continent in 1989 ushered into Cameroon, a new political era governed by the rule of law with many political parties.⁹⁰²

Historically, this new wind of Change led to the launch of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) political party in Bamenda by Ni John Fru Ndi on the 26 May 1990. Prince Panya, like most Cameroonians saw and fondly referred to the Social Democratic Front as “Suffer Don Finish”, a pidgin expression, which means that suffering has ended. This political outfit called and still calls the shots in Cameroon in general as the strongest opposition party since its inception till date.

‘Adamou Ndam Njoya dans le Noun’

This refers to another chairman of the opposition. The chairman of the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU), who, later became ranked fourth out of the seven Presidential contestants in the 1992 Presidential election.

Hameni Bieleu of Bafang also started a political party while Dika Akwa in Douala, was considered at the time as the National President of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC)

⁹⁰²Fuatabong Charles Acheleke, “State Burial for Ntumanzah” in The Post Newspaper of 26 March 2010

Oh! Le parti de Um Nyobe
Ernest Ouandie
Felix Moumie ...

The exclamation at the start of the mention of 'le parti de Um Nyobe' is quite significant in that it expresses regret and nostalgia at the thought of a great nationalist. In effect, the poet here mentions three great revolutionaries and patriots, who could not be compared to the regionalists that he has just listed;

John Fru Ndi a Bamenda,
Adamou Ndam Njoya dans le Noun,
Hameni Bieleu a Bafang
Le Nelson Mandela Camerounais

Prince Panya draws inspiration from Nelson Mandela, the greatest African patriot and nationalist and gives these qualities to Hameni Bieleu. His presentation of these political leaders ridicules the tribalistic nature of politics in Cameroon. Prince Panya, through contrast, seems to be lamenting the greed of contemporary politician, who seems to put self over the common good or national good.

The political arena of Cameroon in the 90s was populated by too many politicians being identified/recognized through various activities that they initiated. It is important to note that all these politicians seem not to have satisfied the aspirations of the people and that seems to be the reason why the poet (singer) under reference, is ridiculing them.

Oh! Mboua Massok oh!
C'est lui le père de ville mortes
Jean Jacques Ekindi
Chasseur de Lion qui n'attrape même pas la vie
Oh! C'est malheureux
Woungly Massaga est toujours présent
Tu montes, il monte
Tu descendes, il descend.
Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni

Zéro mort
Garga Haman Adjì
Le chasseur des valets
Le requins l'ont chassés ...

From a historical point of view, the opposition parties in Cameroon consider Mboua Massok as the one who initiated the ghost town operations of the 1990s during the call for the National Conference.

Jean Jacques Ekindi is leader of the Progressive Movement (PM) political party and is one of the seven candidates who contested the October 11 1992 Presidential election in Cameroon. Before and during the campaigns, he identified himself as the “chasseur de Lion” (the hunter of the Lion) President Paul Biya. The singer ridicules him by saying he cannot even sustain his life. Here, the poet makes use of sarcasm and humour in rendering his -message. On Friday 23 October 1992, when the Supreme Court of Cameroon proclaimed Paul Biya elected president with 39.9% votes against 35.9% for John Fru Ndi, Ekindi was ranked fifth.

Another historical figure in the political history of Cameroon, mentioned by Prince Panya in his song, is Woungly Massaga. This was a strong UPC member, who later went on self-exile. Fuatabong Charles Acheleke in his article “State Burial for Ntumazah?” published in *The Post* Newspaper of 26 March 2010 argues that Woungly Massaga alias Colonel Kassamba, Hogbe Nlend, Mayi Matip, Frederick Kodock and Ndeh Ntumazah can hardly be glorified due to a history of treachery beclouding their conduct within the UPC political party and elsewhere⁹⁰³. It is as a result of Massaga’s inconsistency in his political career that the poet under reference in this study describes him as

“Tu montes, il monte
Tu descendes, il descend”

It is only one without a political vision that follows the crowd as

⁹⁰³A.N. T. Mbu, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon*. Bamenda: 97-99

described in the foregoing two lines. Thus, he is presented as a representative of the confused politicians in Cameroon.

Not particularly interested again in historical details, Prince Panya explores the insensitivity to human life when he talks about Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni and the Zero Mort episode. In his *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon*, A.N.T. Mbu records that between April and May 1991, there were intense student demonstrations and unrest at the University of Yaounde and subsequently, clashes with the forces of law and order. In trying to quell the riots, students were sprayed with tear gas and grenades. Their properties were looted and many girls were rumoured to have been raped and humiliated.

In the “Black May Month” of 1991, terror and brutality reigned in the University area and at least 58 students were feared death. The government and University authorities played down on the student unrest and thus the then Minister of Communication and Spokesman for the Government argued that there was “zero mort” (no dead) in the University. They were these events that led President Paul Biya to create the Endeley Commission of Inquiry to prop into the events.⁹⁰⁴

The commission was made up of Justice S.M.L. Endeley (President), Mrs Mballa Mballa Odile (Secretary), Reverend Pastor Dr. Motsebo, Abbe Simon Epea, Lawyer Leo, Yousoufa Daouda (MP), Albert Waingeh (MP), El Hadj Banufe and Babillon Pierre (99). A.N.T. Mbu further records that the commission was given six weeks to make its findings published in English and French in the Cameroon Official Gazette as a matter of urgency. According to the findings, there were records, of theft, and brutality by the forces of law and order, rapes, disappearances, deaths and humiliation of students⁹⁰⁵. Consequently, these findings contradicted the ‘zero mort’ announcement by Augustin Kontchou Kouomeni, then Minister of Communication.

The poet in this particular area through the mention of ‘zero mort’ laments lies telling and in particular, deaths from bullets by law enforcement agents. The poet and the public know the truth. “Zero mort” is used now as a noun in Cameroon. The poet condemns

⁹⁰⁴Ibid, 101-105.

⁹⁰⁵Niyi Osundare, *Songs of the Season*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1990, 54.

government's immunity on culprits of death by triggers of their agents and views the Minister's declaration as the mark of insensitivity and lack of value for human life. This callous attitude of public figures towards police shoot-out on armless citizens is also recaptured in an African poem, "Only Four" based on the 8 June, 1986 students' protest at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria against the high-handedness of their Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ango Abdulahi. In this poem, Niyi Osundare recounts that during this students' protest, the Vice-Chancellor's invitation of the police to quell the crisis led to the death of some students while many were injured. Eager to refute the press report that many students lost their lives, the Vice-Chancellor, explained that only FOUR died. To the aggrieved Nigerian public, whose feelings the poet presents, the phrase ONLY FOUR was a callous expression of the low value for human life, a slap on the sad emotion of the aggrieved parents:

The students assailed my comfort
For just a few hours
And I called the police to quell the row
My guests fired their guns
(After all, the mob too fired
Their volleys of noisy chants)
And a few students decided to die
The press then screamed
As if it was a senseless massacre
But when I counted the corpses
They numbered a meagre FOUR
FOUR, yes, only Four!
From a crowd of a dozen thousand
How can FOUR dead be such a crime?⁹⁰⁶

The sarcasm in the stanza above derives from the use of the first person singular pronoun I - persona that conveys the Vice-Chancellor's indifference towards the dead students.

⁹⁰⁶Rotcod GOBATA, *The Past Tense of Shit Book One*. Nooremac Press, 1993, 159.

By presenting Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni as ‘Zero Mort’ and Garga Haman Adjì as ‘Le chasseur de valets

Le requins l’ont chassée...

The poet uses the poetic device of contrast. Prince Panya explores this device while reflecting on varying circumstances of patriotic or unpatriotic expectations by deceitful politicians, traitors and wealth acquisitions. These are represented in the images of “chasseur” (hunter) and ‘le requins” (sharks). The meaning of this part of the song is to be gleaned from the knowledge of the history surrounding these personages.

Garga Haman Adjì resigned as Paul Biya’s Minister of Public Service and State Control on Thursday 27 August 1992 before the 11 October Presidential election of 1992 due to the failure of the Government (President) in arresting the corrupt Government officials that he had proposed to hierarchy. Prince Panya argues that since Garga Haman Adjì wanted to be the hunter of corrupt officials, the sharks of the corrupt system, chased him out of office.

Commenting on Garga Haman Adjì’s resignation, Rotcod GOBATA submits:

Garga Haman, together with the former Minister of Post and Telecommunications, Sanda Oumarou, were generally regarded by the Cameroonian masses as having sufficient personal credibility in spite of being members of an evil regime. Garga Haman’s press interview over his resignation as Minister of Public Service shows how absolutely impossible it has been to reform the regime within. It also shows that there are many skeletons locked up in cupboards, which will shock us whenever they come to light...⁹⁰⁷

It is first, because of the credibility of Haman Adjì and second, because of ‘skeletons locked up in the cupboards’ of the regime in power that the sharks in the government had to “chase him out of

⁹⁰⁷A.N. T. Mbu, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon*. Bamenda: 179-183.

government”.

Prince Panya’s further poetic device for avoiding historical details is allusion to historical personages, which conjures up the historical events or incidents surrounding particular historical personages in the lines in which they occur. When the poet (singer) explores this, he is reflecting on circumstances of tribalism, revenge, exile, traitors and backstabbing in Cameroonian politics. These are represented in the following lines of the song:

Samuel Ebua est parti au Nord
Pour créer L’UNDP
Bello Bouba Maigari revient
La vengeance poursuivant le crime
Ebua est renvoyé
Gustave Essaka est à Douala

Historically, Bello Bouba Maigari from the Northern Region of Cameroon is generally regarded as the real political son of late Ahmadou Ahidjo, the first President of Cameroon. During the trying days of Ahidjo’s followers in, the early 1980s (after the failed coup d’état by some Northern elite), Bello Bouba Maigari who was the first Prime Minister under President Paul Biya, escaped to Nigeria in self-exile. He lived in Kaduna for 12 years and returned to Cameroon in August 1991 to run for the Presidency. In his absence, Samuel Ebua from Nkongsamba, in the Littoral Region of Cameroon, had created the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) political party with himself as its pioneer leader. On his return to Cameroon, Bello Bouba Maigari joined and militated in the UNDP political party. When it looked like Mr Samuel Ebua could be in his way for his Presidential ambition, Bello Bouba convened a UNDP congress in Garoua, which ousted his rival, Samuel Ebua, who was not even in attendance, and crowned himself the new leader of the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) political party.

While the confusion and eventual ‘coup d’état’ in the Bello Bouba - Samuel Ebua political party is going on in Garoua, North of Cameroon, Gustav Essaka, another political activist, is carrying on his

activities in Douala. Gustav Essaka was the leader of the Democratique Integral du Cameroun (DIC) political party. He was very active in the coordination of other political opinions, alongside other frontline opposition parties during the Civil Disobedience and Ghost Town Operations in Cameroon.

As a committed African oralist, Prince Panya is a traditionalist and a very strong believer in the essence of communal life. As such, he constantly addresses his audience in order to convince them that he is speaking to and for them. He is, therefore, a spokesperson for them. That is why in the confused and tribalistic political atmosphere reigning in Cameroon, he sounds a note of warning to his audience, his fellow Cameroonians in the following words:

“Mes amis rnetions nous”

In these words, the artist is warning his friends to watch out or be very careful in such a political atmosphere. Through this approach, the poet is able to establish himself as one who naturally wins the help and sympathy of his fellow compatriots. At the end of the poem, we come to realize that Prince Panya is pleading with the politicians to leave the people alone, suggesting that the people would be happier without such numerous political parties and politicians. As a representative of the people, the singer condemns the ways of the politicians without any reservations.

In the characteristic manner of the oral artist, he refers to his audience as his brothers and friends in order to win their sympathy and support:

Avec tous ca mes frères
L'homme d'Etoudi demande:
“Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez?”
“Conférence Nationale!”
“Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez?”
“Conférence Nationale!”
Après cela mes chers amis
L'homme lion prépare un voyage à Douala ...

Arrive à Douala, il nous salut
 “Me voici donc à Douala
 Tant que Yaoundé respire
 Le Cameroun est toujours en vie
 Votre Conférence Nationale Souverain est sans objet.”

From the excerpt quoted above, one can argue that Prince Panya's varying attitudes to “historical incidents are expressed through humour, irony, and metaphor as well as through the I/we persona. This writer has mentioned at the start of the analysis of this song how its title “Conference Nationale” got its inspiration.

It is from this part of the song that the artist got the title of his song. In this excerpt, the poet uses metaphors to refer to President Paul Biya during the turbulent political era of Cameroon.

“L'homme d'Etoudi” and “L'homme Lion”

Both refer to President Biya. ‘L'homme d'Etoudi’ (The man of Etoudi) refers to him as it is in Etoudi, a quarter in Yaounde metropolis, where the Presidential Palace of Cameroon is situated. ‘L'homme Lion’ (The Lion man). This metaphor is a slogan that Biya and his campaign team used for the 1992 Presidential election to describe him relative to the other presidential hopefuls.

The repetition of the question and answer here expressed in the form of a dramatic monologue lays emphasis on the title of the song in order to highlight the President's discourse that many political activists claimed to be rude and provocative. During the political upheavals that we have mentioned earlier in this chapter, the main opposition political party called for ‘a ‘National Conference’ and later a ‘Sovereign National Conference’, which should be placed under a Provisionary Government. A.N.T. Mbu in his *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon* argues that even Cameroon People Democratic Party (CPOM) political party, which is the President's party, had progressives like Jean Jacques Ekindi, Francois Sengat Kuo, Robert Mbella Mbappe and James Onobiono who advised Biya to accept the national conference.

In a television interview, President Biya referred to the call for a

National Conference as “sans objet” (pointless or of no importance)⁹⁰⁸. At the mention of these words, some major cities in Cameroon like Douala, Bafoussam, Bamenda, Buea just to mention these had most of the government institutions vandalized by the population in order to express their seething anger.

After this vandalism, most Cameroonian press thought that it would be unsafe for the President to visit these major cities. It is at this stage that the poet informs us as he identifies with his audience, that the President’s advisers advised him against visiting Douala. In spite of their refusal, the President visited Douala and that is why at his arrival, another provocative and rude discourse that angered the populace was uttered. In his song, Prince Panya sings:

Arrives à Douala, il nous salut
“Me voici donc à Douala
Tant que Yaoundé respire
Le Cameroun est toujours en vie
Votre Conférence Nationale souverain est sans objet”

This poem or song mocks the activities of ‘the Cameroonian politicians from independence to the present. Indeed, one can say from the beginning of this song to the end, the poet is lamenting the lies telling, tribalism, nepotism, looting, unpatriotism, spitefulness, greed and the undiplomatic nature of the politicians. It is, indeed, a lamentation of the destruction of positive values in the Cameroonian society. The discourse of the President, presented by Prince Panya, is not diplomatic. This leads us to submit that such a discourse only contributes to increasing the tension that characterized the cities and ultimately led to the destruction of government institutions that we have mentioned earlier. It is undiplomatic for a President to say

me voici donc a Douala ...
tant que Yaounde respire
le Cameroun est toujours en vie ...

⁹⁰⁸Rotcod GOBATA, *The Past Tense of Shit*, Book One. Nooremac Press, 1993, 159

It is Rotcod GOBATA in his *The Past Tense of Shit*, who aptly captures this undiplomatic presentation of Mr President in the following submission:

Indeed, if anybody wanted an appropriate caption for Biya's Douala Speech and, in fact, for his entire provincial safari, this would take the prize: "Me voici ... Me voici donc a Douala", Translation: na me this for Douala! Wetin una fit do me? Una bi say I no fit put foot for here. Na me this. Make una do wetin una fit do make I see. U think say I de fear? Wetin una fit do me?!"⁹⁰⁹

No other presentation or translation of the President's statement could have been more appropriate than GOBATA's and most especially his translation is in Pidgin English, the most popular lingua franca, that is understood by majority of the Cameroonian people on behalf of whom Rotcod GOBATA seems to be talking.

History holds that the military was heavily mobilized to the financial disadvantage of the state to prepare for the visit of the President to Douala. Rotcod GOBATA again records that Biya could not beat his chest as he did in the quoted excerpt above if he had not taken along with him to Douala, "the entire army ... preceding, accompanying and following with all the guns, machine guns, tanks and what have you?"⁹¹⁰. If the first Cameroonian and politician can be too insensitive to the will of the majority of Cameroonians and can be so undiplomatic to say that if all goes well in Yaounde, then all is well in Cameroon, then we wonder what the plethora of politicians in the country would say or do. If parents - in the name of politicians are so corrupt and unpatriotic, Prince Panya is wondering what future is being prepared for the younger generation. He questions:

Quel Cameroun pour nos enfants?
Dans le 'njoh'
Quel Cameroun pour la descendance?

⁹⁰⁹Ibid

⁹¹⁰Depa

Dans le 'chokko'
Le Cameroun de nos ancêtres?
Dans le fifty fifty
Le Cameroun des nos aveux?

This section of the poem is a lamentation of the future of the children. The poet uses contrast here to mourn for the present and the future in contrast with the Cameroon of the ancestors. To him, the Cameroon today is that of 'njoh' (a pidgin) word which stands for (free things). Due to 'chokko' (a strange linguistic concoction of Douala, English, French and Pidgin commonly known in Cameroon as "Mboko talk"), which means bribery and corruption, the poet laments the future that is prepared for the younger generation.

To further corroborate the corrupt nature of the present society and generation, the poet, laments as follows:

Nos enfants n'aiment même plus l'école
Ils quittent la maison, chaque matin
pour se rendre à l'école
arrive en route ça va changer
le pantalon au milieu des fesses
la demi-jupe déjà portée
pour remplacer la tenue
les voilà dans les salles de jeux
ils sont partis sur internet
pour chercher les maris et les copains

This is a common cry in present-day-Cameroon relative to the attitude of the younger generation. Children as Prince Panya is regretting in this excerpt, no longer love schooling. This is demonstrated in the fact that they leave the house in the morning for school in uniforms but have other dresses in their bags that they put on, on the way to school - with very short skirts and trousers hanging mid-way their buttocks in the name of fashion. They then go to Cyber Cafes where they search the Internet "for husbands and friends". They go to Video Clubs and Gambling houses instead of going to school.

This is the generation that will take over the future of Cameroon.

In the chorus, Prince Panya weeps for present-day-Cameroon. He uses contrast again to mourn the glorious past. His very strong appeal is to the politicians:

Politiciens laissez le people tranquille
Politiciens laissez le people tranquille
Politiciens laissez le people tranquille
Oh Politiciens laissez le people tranquille

Majority of the politicians presented in this song are those who do not work for the interest of the people. They are, indeed, those with negative characteristics who cannot contribute to any meaningful development in the society. Consequently, he pleads with them to stop confusing the masses with their political messages by leaving them alone.

Drawing inspiration from history, Prince Panya in this song laments over the slavery phase of European imperialism, the trans-Atlantic and trans-Saharan slave trades as well as neo-colonialism. He argues that his people primarily never depended on anybody:

On ne dépendait de personne
ni des anglais, ni des français, ni des américains
il y'a eu l'esclavage,
il y'a' eu la colonisation
après les indépendances
les nouvelles formes d'esclavages
les nouvelles formes des colonisations

From an honest evaluation of these phases of history in Africa, the poet-singer concludes that the people were never made richer but poorer. The new form of slavery and colonization are the devaluation of African currency in order to render the people poorer.

Dévaluation
Imposition

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, one can make bold to conclude that the relationship between contemporary historical reality and Prince Panya's song, "Conference Nationale" has been established. While history remains the reservoir of creative imagination, what Prince Panya looks for in history is not so much the truth as fiction.

Historical narration in this study is transformed into poetry (song) through diverse poetic devices. Through allusion to place names, the poet (singer) avoids historical details and secures poetic laconic precision and conciseness. Similarly, allusion to historical personages conjures up the particular historical events and incidents surrounding particular historical personages in the lines, stanzas or song in general in which they occur. Through this device, the singer (poet) expresses the universal truth about the inevitable doom's end of tyrants.

This song also reflects on Cameroonians' ambivalent attitudes to historical situations; as well as on the patriotic and unpatriotic circumstances of public figures such as treasury looters, deceitful politicians, traitors, wealth acquirers, the scourge of tyrants and their sins.

The poet's varying attitudes to historical incidents are expressed through analogy, humour, sarcasm, irony, metaphor, contrast, and other language devices. Through these devices, Prince Panya transforms historical reality into poetry. In the singer's lamentation, he uses contrast as an effective device to demonstrate that patriotic and dedicated politicians existed in the past in the likes of Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, Steve Biko, Samora M., Marchel, Ruben Um Nyobe, Ernest Ouandie, Felix Moumie to list a few as against the deceitful, and unpatriotic politicians of contemporary Africa; the likes of Gustav Essaka, Dika Akwa, Woungly Massaga, Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni, Bello Bouba Maigari to mention just these.

This chapter strongly concludes that contemporary historical facts and society remain the muse for creative imagination and, consequently, the popular song in post-independent Cameroon

benefits from this reality to criticize society and thus contributes to the development of the country.

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Appendix

The Song: “Conference Nationale”

L'heure de la sagesse a sonné
C'est L'heure de 'intelligence - oh!
Africains devenons sage
Ça fait longtemps mes chers amis
Qu'on demandes l'indépendance
Ceux qui demandaient l'Independence
Ont étaient assassinés

Ruben Um Nyobe
Assassine
Patrice Lumumba
Assassine
Kwame Nkrumah
Assassine
Ernest Ouandie
Assassine
Steve Biko
Assassine

Pour ce qui concerne le Cameroun
1960 oh!! C'était l'année de l'indépendance
Deux Etats Fédères
Deux Premiers Ministres
Ahmadou Ahidjo était à l'Est
John Ngu Foncha était à l'Ouest
Le République Fédéral oh!!

Quelques années plus tard
Le Cameroun est unifié
Ahmadou Ahidjo est Président
John Ngu Foncha Vice-Président

C'était trop fort!
C'était trop dur!
C'était le Cameroun en fer
Ce n'était pas le Cameroun en bois

Dix ans plus tard
Changement de politique à Yaoundé
Au revoir le Nord
Bonjour le Sud
Au revoir Mohammed
Bonjour Jésus
Au revoir gandaïra
Bonjour la veste avec la cravate
C'était trop beau
C'était trop tôt
Le langage avait change
C'était la rigueur
C'était la moralisation

Deux ans plus tard
Coup d'Etat manque à Yaoundé
Après cela mes cher amis
Ça a commencé à chauffer
En 1988
John Fru Ndi à Bamenda
Suffer don Finish
Adamou Ndam Njoya dans le Noun
Le berceau de l'humanité
Hameni Bleleu à Bafang
Le Nelson Mandela Camerounais

Dika Akwa est à Douala
Il s'est dirigé comme Président national de l'UPC
Oh! Le parti de Um Nyobe
Ernest Ouandie
Felix Moumie

C'est le parti du crabe
Oh Mboua Massok oh!
C'est lui le pare de Ville Mortes
Jean Jacques Ekindi
Chasseur de Lion qui n'attrape même pas la vie
Oh! C'est malheureux

Woungly Massaga est toujours présent
Tu montes, il monte
Tu descendes, il descende
Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni
Zéro mort
Garga Haman Adjì
Le chasseur de valets
Les requins l'ont chasses

Samuel Ebua est parti au Nord
Pour créer l'UNDP
Bello Bouba Maigari revient!
La vengeance poursuivant le crime
Ebua est renvoyé

Gustave Essaka est à Douala
Premier tromvi de la vie
Le plus allemand de Camerounais
Mes amis méfions-nous
Avec tous y a mes frères
L'homme d'Etoudi demande
Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez?
Conférence Nationale!
Qu'est-ce que vous voulez?
Conférence Nationale!

Mais qu'est-ce que vous voulez?
Conférence Nationale!

Après cela, mes chers amis
L'homme Lion prépare un voyage à Douala
Dans le métier
Les conseillers ont dissents non
Mais il est venu
Arrive à Douala, il nous salut:

“Me voici donc à Douala!!
Tant que Yaoundé respire
Le Cameroun est toujours en vie
Votre Conférence Nationale souverain est sans objet!”

Que Cameroun pour nos enfants?
Dans le ‘njoh’
Que Cameroun pour la descendance?
Dans le ‘chokko’
Le Cameroun de nos ancêtres?
Dans le fifty fifty
Le Cameroun des nos aveux?

Nous enfants n'aiment même plus l'école
ils quittent la maison chaque matin pour se rendre à l'école
Arrive en route et va changer
Le pantalon au milieu des fesses
La demi-jupe déjà portée
Pour remplacer la tenue
Les voilà au vidéo club
Les voilà dans les salles de jeux
Ils sont partis sur internet
Pour chercher les maris et les copains

Cameroun oh! Cameroun oh! Cameroun oh!
Cameroun de nos aveux
Cameroun de nos ancêtres
Politiciens laissez le peuple tranquille
Politiciens laissez le peuple tranquille

Politiciens laissez le peuple tranquille
Oh Politiciens laissez le peuple tranquille

Ça fait longtemps mes chers amis
On ne dépendait de personne
ni des anglais
ni des français
ni des américains
Il y'a eu l'esclavage
Après l'indépendances
Les nouvelles formes d'esclavages
Les nouvelles formes des colonisations

Honnêtement
Dévaluation
Imposition
Pour nous créer les maux de poche

Cultural Practices and Female Adolescent Self-Concept in Weh Village - Cameroon

By

Epah George and NTEM Njang Cecilia

Abstract

Self-concept can be defined as that which makes a person to be truly and intrinsically oneself as a person beyond the variation of his/her consciousness. Becoming oneself for a female adolescent of Weh village, for example, implies being self-conscious and not limiting herself. The fact that the female adolescent of Weh perceives herself negatively due to the barrier created by gender differences imbued in the culture, can seriously, hamper harmonious development, particularly when such cultural practices affect her representations or perception. We examined the effects that cultural practices have on the self-concept of female adolescents. Data collected was analysed quantitatively using the Pearson Product Moment correlation and qualitatively, we used content analysis. The conclusion is that cultural practices negatively affect the self-concept of the female adolescents of Weh village with strong factors such as participation in decision making and access to education, impacting more than others with negative consequences on development.

Introduction

Culture is more than the shared concepts about the meanings of things (Thompson, 1990). Culture also consists of the way people raise children, educate the population to produce goods and services, make and enforce social policies. It also includes the distribution of rights, privileges, opportunities obligations and wealth among various groups

of people. In addition, culture, includes the division of labour which integrates or segregates various activities from: each other. These aspects of culture can surely affect people's behaviour. To say that cultural practices are right because a culture says they are, does not permit us to challenge cultural practices to change when change is called for (Burn, 1996). We need to be critical of some cultural practices, in order to promote change because many cultural practices have barriers and interdictions which are regressive and repugnant toward self- and other development.

The Weh culture is an example in the Cameroonian context, where it is the woman, who cultivates the farm, feeds her husband and children. The husband is the head of the family as in I Corinthians 11: 3 (Burdick and others, 1985) but he depends on his wife for food. When children are delivered into this society, they undergo differential socialisation so as to assure this continuity from generation to generation. It is the mother who cares, nurtures and educates all the children indiscriminately when they are very young as observed in the Weh society, but when they get to the age of about six, the boy starts following his father to acquire his role in the society, which constitutes hunting, fishing and tapping. The female child on the other hand, remains attached to the mother to learn her own role in the society (Freud, 1924) cited in (Gross, 2005) through informal education which includes house-keeping, Laundry, caring for her younger siblings, cooking and agriculture (Cheghe, 2001). The girl child who sometimes sees herself as marginalised and suppressed because unlike her brother, she does not have that liberty to play as she wants, since the culture requires her to learn her role very well besides her mother so as to attract the man who will marry her in the nearest future. Because of the strict way in which she is brought up, her developing self- concept can be affected in a negative manner.

Gender is an important component of a child's self-concept. Children become aware of it very early in life due to differential socialisation by parents (Fagot, et al, 1992). Parents do so by rewarding appropriate behaviour and punishing inappropriate one and by this manner, the children acquire their roles in the society. Notwithstanding, gender role conceptions in Europe and America, in

short, industrialised developed countries and cultures are different from that of Weh in Cameroon, a typical African Society in which the idea of women's emancipation is still developing. More to that derogatory statements about women such as the following "*you are only a woman*", "*the place of the women is only on the bed*", "*Women are only fit for the bed*", "*Women are devils*", "*Women are like children*", *they lack intelligence*", "*all women are flirts*", "*Women are cursed by God*": "*Women don't inherit from their fathers and husbands*", "*all women are liars*", "*women are always wrong*", (Luma, 1983, p.247-248) can cause them to feel like second class citizens with negatively developed self-concepts which they can transfer to their female children through the socialisation process (Bandura, 1986)

The Problem

Erikson's self-theory (1963) in the fifth stage says that the crisis that the adolescent needs to resolve before passing unto the next stage of psychosocial development is identity versus role confusion. Erikson indicated that identity is attained from "achievement that has meaning in the culture" (Erikson, 1965 p. 228). Given that this theory was developed in a male dominant culture it is pertinent for this study which studies how a female adolescent develops a self-concept in a male dominant culture like that of Weh. It follows from the above that only the adolescent who achieves values that has meaning in the culture will resolve the crisis in a positive manner and develop a positive Self-concept and pass into the next psychosocial stage of development (adolescent boys), the adolescent girls in Weh cannot achieve those values that have meaning in the culture because of cultural barriers and hence resolve the crisis in a negative manner developing a negative self-concept.

According to Harter (1996) self-concept is the image of oneself. It is what we believe about who we are, that is the total picture of our abilities and traits. From the above definition, it is evident that self-concept is a cognitive construct: That is a system of descriptive and evaluative representations about the self. Based on Harter's view of the self we can say that the child's self-concept develops from the

environment through learning and modelling behaviour from the same sex parent (Bussey and Bandura, 1999).

Cultural practices are the traditional beliefs that influence the development of the personality of an individual (Santrock, 1995). These cultural practices are evident in a village setting where gender differentiation and treatment are strict. On the other hand, the female adolescents of Weh are identified with negative representations such as feelings of non-acceptance, withdrawal, inferiority, feelings of incompetence, lack of self-confidence, not assertive leading to over dependence on the males.

The Weh woman behaves in a way that is similar to that of any African rural woman, who is totally dependent on a man for her livelihood. This is so because, according to Bandura (1986), a child learns her role from the environment by modelling the behaviour of the same sex parent. She internalises this dependent behaviour of her mother and elder female siblings into her self-concept as hers. More to that research finding has shown that children who are dependent on others for their needs develop a negative self-concept (Akondi, 2000). For example, in Weh the traditional belief is that a lady is an inferior or subordinate being in the society to a man (Mbock, 1996) though as a citizen she has the right to own land. The male in the Weh village controls everything right down to land whereas the female in this same community rely solely on land for her livelihood but cannot personally own land (Cheghe, 2001). This observation has a negative influence on the developing self-concept of a female child at adolescence. More to that, land ownership is an indication of the possibility for more food crops ‘ to be cultivated for domestic consumption and excess sold for economic purposes. Land ownership also gives a possibility to build houses and lease them out for economic reasons. The indication to build is equally an indication for power. The fact that the female adolescent is denied that right to own land in the Weh village can impact her self-concept development negatively.

Furthermore, we understand that a woman has never taken part in the socio-political affairs of the village (Cheghe, 2001, p.36). This is simply attributed to her biological predisposition of procreation and childcare which tends to limit her chances and place her in an inferior

position as compared to a man. In spite of the high cognitive authority that a woman expresses in the manner in which she coordinates and carries out her daily task (Tchombe, 2008), limiting her role only to the cultivation of crops, procreation and the household activities can cause her see herself as an inferior being (characteristic of negative self-concept). She cannot participate in decision making neither in her home nor in the society. This behaviour: reduces her chances of influencing decisions (Maslow, 1970) in the Weh village. Consequently in Weh decision making bodies like the “*kweifo*” and “*ndau-tse*” (house that advises the Fon), excludes women. It is therefore evident that the administrative affair of the village is reserved, only for men, leaving out women in decision making. Sometimes it happens that decisions that are taken by the men can encroach into the rights of the females. Though the women contributed about two third of the work done in the entire village (Cheghe, 2001), they are not considered when decisions are to be taken. Women cultivate, harvest and prepare most of the food and serve it to their families. Though the population of women (58%) is higher than that of men (42%) (PNUD, 2000) in the Weh society the proportion of the women who participate in decision making as compared to that of men just like in any other decision making body in Cameroon is very insignificant. For example, out of the 180 members of parliaments in the National Assembly, only 20 are women making a percentage of 11.1 % (L’UNIFEM, 2007). A statistic which is similar to that Weh reflects mostly male interest. This kind of situation in which decision making is almost exclusively handled by men in a society with higher percentage of women can cause a negative effects self-concept development of female adolescents in Weh village.

The negative self-concepts that female adolescents develop in the Weh village are often influenced by beliefs, values, attitudes, tendencies that the culture holds towards them. In addition a child’s thought is not different from that of his environment (Vygotsky, 1978’ However, despite the important role that the feminine gender plays in the society through childbearing, childcare and agriculture, she is not given access to inheritance of either her husband’s or father’s property in Weh. This is because in this community access to inheritance is patrilineal that is,

follows the male line. It starts with the father then it goes to his brothers and step brothers, all male children who belong to the same compound called "*kebih*" will have taken their turns according to their ages, whereas all their compound sisters are considered strangers. Refusing an adolescent girl child an access to inheritance of property on the basis her gender might impact her self-concept development negatively.

Education is an important tool for economic development of any society. Adolescent girls need opportunities to learn about different viewpoints and career options as they begin the search for identity (Meece, 1997). Unfortunately, the environment often impede and restrict children's personal development by undermining their sense of competency and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) by enforcing rigid gender-role expectations and by limiting children's options for the future through education. When this happens the girl child develops negative feeling about her competence in achieving values in the society. Also the view of the society can cause her to lose confidence in her capabilities and to rely on the males which according to Meece may influence the girl to develop a negative attitude towards herself with respect to education. This negative attitude that she develops towards education can create a corresponding negative impact in her self-concept development.

Based on the above discussions on cultural practices and the possibility of negative self-concept development in female adolescents, the main research question that is raised is: Do cultural practices negatively influence the self-concept of female adolescents in the Weh context?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

William James theory of the Self- concept

William James was the first psychologist to work on self-concept. He considered the global self as the "me" and "I" (Burns, 1982. p.16). His analysis of self-concept resulted to four components of this objective self which he classed in descending order of importance. These four are the spiritual self, the material self, the social self and the

bodily self. Based on James theory if an individual experiences any discrimination between the “I” and “me” in any of the above mentioned components that James identified then his/her self too is distorted.

Symbolic interactionist theoretical view of the Self

This theoretical view of self-concept was developed by Mead (1934) and Cooley (1912). They produced a new perspective on the individual-society relationship. According to them symbolic interaction involves 3 basic premises. Firstly, humans respond to the environment on the basis of the meanings that elements of the environments have for them as individuals; secondly, such meanings are a product of social interaction and thirdly, these societal/cultural meanings are modified through individual interpretation within the sphere of this shared interaction. Self and society is constructed out of the sum of the behaviours of the humans composing that society, which places social limits on the individual.

Based on these theorists an individual will have that tendency to react to those elements of the environments according to the meaning that it has for them. Therefore depending on the environment every individual will desire to interact with those meaningful elements; where access and approval are given to them, they develop positive self-concept; where they meet with disapproval and barriers they develop a negative self-concept.

Phenomenological approaches to Self-concept

The phenomenological approach in psychology is that perspective that tries to understand man through the impressions of the subject and not through the eyes of an observer. This view developed by humanistic psychologists like Maslow (1968) and Rogers (1951) sought to understand how an individual views the self; how her needs, feelings, values, beliefs and unique perception of her environment influence her behaviour which is a function of the personal meanings attached to an individual's perception of past and contemporaneous experiences. We cannot Change events but we can change our perceptions and interpretations of them. Behaviour for a

phenomenologist can only be understood from the point of view of the behaving individual. Perceptions are selective and often more quite erroneous as a result of the distortion engendered by motives, goals, attitudes, and defence mechanisms (Bruner and Goodman, 1947) cited in Burns (1982).

Based on the phenomenologist they perceive self as behaviour that develops from the perspective of the individual and not from others. Therefore a positive or negative self develops depending on how an individual perceive a situation in the environment. If she perceives herself capable of handling certain activities in the environment and she instead meets with barriers then she develops a negative self-concept.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

Erikson (1959) was Freud's disciple who laid emphasis on psychosocial development across the life span. Each stage of his theory involves a crisis that must be resolved for the child to continue into the next stage (Erikson, Ibid). His theory is made up of eight stages which are basic trust versus basic mistrust, autonomy versus shame/doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair. For the purpose of our study we shall focus on stage five of Erikson's theory because the age group we are considering falls within this stage (13-22).

Erikson (1963) saw adolescence as one of the most critical life period because of the central role that self-concept plays, how we think, feel and behave. He therefore, termed this developmental crisis of the adolescent years, identity versus role confusion. At this point the bridge between childhood and adulthood is crossed and so teenagers carry out experiment on different roles in the quest for an identity of their own. Erikson's theory is considered as the main theoretical backing for this study because it emphasizes self-development in a cultural context. He demonstrated in (1965) how cultures elaborate an identity out of a biologically given basis, which is appropriate to the culture in question and manageable by the individual. Erikson (1965, p. 228) indicated that identity comes from "achievement that has

meaning in the culture”. But Erikson (1968) saw these processes as unconscious. He criticised terms such as self-conceptualisation, self-image and self-esteem, which provide a static view of what he considered an evolving process “for identity is never established as an achievement in the form of a personality armour, or anything static and unchangeable” (Erikson, 1968, p. 24).identity formation, like the ideas of Rogers (1959) on self-actualisation, is a continuing process of progressive differentiations and crystallisations which expand self-awareness of the inadequacy of existing identity as life advances generates initial confusion followed by the exploration of new identities and new ways of being. Erikson (1968) claims that an optimal sense of identity means knowing where one is going and having that inner assuredness.

Conceptual Issues

Differential socialisation of the child

Socialisation is the process by which a child’s behaviour is moulded to fit with the society’s norms, roles, beliefs, and expectations (Bugental and Goodnow, 1998). It usually continues throughout childhood, and it turns to affect most of the child’s complex social behaviours, such as moral development and social interaction. Social conditioning of one’s belief and behaviour takes place in both conscious and unconscious ways. A child’s social learning occurs initially in the family and is gradually extended outside. By the time they reach adolescence, girls will have been exposed to a wider domain, including extended family relations, schools, community, and in some cases, employment. Popular opinion about gender stereotypes is passed on through the family, school and the economic organizations of home and work, and through the media and is set against a backdrop of history and tradition.

Cultural and social attitudes about girls’ roles and the division of labour in everyday life influence girls’ status immensely. Culture and social structures do not encourage girls to break the traditional customs and practices which may or may not be discriminating. The inner strength and confidence are required to take an exception with

tradition. In other words, an adolescent girl needs to have strong self-esteem and be able to value herself enough to raise a question about customs which are traditional but are also discriminating, and to articulate her equal rights to life.

The ideologies and images that girls absorb and hold during the formative and uncertain years of adolescence through socialization have crucial effect on how they determine their future roles in a society. Girls' self-image declines in early adolescence to a much greater extent than boys', and can remain low throughout adolescence (Kurz and Prather, 1995). Related concepts, such as self-esteem and self-confidence, also show decline. (Kurz and Prather, 1995) If they live in the community where men are always the decision-makers for example that of Weh, where women are considered to be less able and significant than men, adolescent girls may accept the idea that they are inferior to boys. Adolescent girls need an encouraging environment in which their equality with boys is recognized and their well-being is seriously a concern, and which teaches them their rights and entitlements.

Home is the place where socialization of a child begins, and where the biggest change can happen about the empowerment of the girl child. Mothers and fathers, and guardians alike, need to be made aware that both girls and boys are equal and that no preferential treatment should be given to any of them.

Cultural shaping of the Self

From the first days of an infant's life, care-givers adopt practices that are largely compatible with their own cultural views of the self. Consider, for instance sleeping arrangements. From the first weeks of life, most European/American infants sleep in their own beds, often in their own rooms (Morelli et al., 1992). Though parents give a variety of reasons for this practice (including safety concerns), a significant number believe that sleeping apart train children to be independent (Morelli et al., 1992).

Autonomy training pervades other aspects of child-rearing as well. For example, European/American parents begin to teach children they have the right to an opinion by offering choices long before children

can properly reply (Markus and Kitayama, 1998), whereas in Weh typical African Cameroonian culture choices are imposed on children from birth. Once a child is old enough to engage in a conversation, middle-income mothers try not to infringe on the child's right to articulate his or her point of view, even if the child is mistaken or fabricating events (Wiley et al., 1998).

Influence of culture on Self-concept

The society in which we live, or the ethnic group, to which we belong, shapes most of our beliefs, values and behaviours - and these play important roles in shaping the character of the personality. Dion and Dion (1993) argue that members of collectivist and individualistic cultures think differently about love and marriage. Their thesis is that romantic conceptualizations of love flourish only in individualistic cultures. Why? Since the notions of love and marriage focus narrowly on the specific needs of the individual. Romantic love is "selfish" in the dictionary sense of "seeking or concentrating on one's own welfare or advantage." How does self-concept develop?

Development of Self-concept and its components

Why it is so critical to consider the child's developing self-concept. Why is the development of a healthy self-concept important? Demoulin (1999, p.2) defined self-concept as:

The sum total of all experiences we are exposed to over time and the negative or positive weights we assign to those experiences it is, in a small sense, a personal composite of ourselves and consists of two major sub-components: self-efficacy which is our sensitivity toward some task and based on motivation, confidence, and ability to control stress associated with that task; and self-esteem which is a perception of self and the weight that is placed on the perception of significant others.

The importance of positive early childhood experiences is emphasised, as it is between the ages of two and six that a child begins to form and develop self-concept (Demoulin 1999, P.4). Furthermore,

research indicated that approximately eighty-per cent of a child's self-concept is developed by the age of five. The child's self-concept develops as a result of social interactions discussed earlier. The development of self-acceptance and self-esteem depends upon the quality and nature of the various interactions that occur. Essential to social interaction are the issues of "empathy, trust, nurturance, and expectations" (Hattle, 1992, p.126). In early childhood, the child's developing self-concept is largely influenced by "parental evaluations, interests, and expectations" (Hattle, 1992, p.189). Thus, parents play a critical role in promoting a healthy self-concept. One way to promote its development is to give positive feedback to the child "Feedback is probably among the most powerful modifiers of one's self-concept" (Hattle, 1992, p.251).

Hypotheses

-General hypothesis:

Cultural practices negatively influence the self-concept of female adolescents

-Specific hypotheses:

RH1: Landownership has a negative effect on the self-concept of female adolescents.

RH2: Participating in decision making negatively influences the self-concept of adolescents.

RH3: Access to inheritance of property has a negative effect on the self-concept of female adolescents.

RH4: Access to education negatively influences the self-concept of female adolescents.

Methodology Research Design

In this study we have employed the correlation study design because we desired to find out the link that exists between the self-concept of female adolescent and some cultural practices of the Weh community.

Site of the Study

The Weh village is found in Fungom Sub-Division of the Menchum Division, North West Region of Cameroon. It is found in the rural area. Weh village is divided into five quarters. This village was selected for the study, first because it is a junction village and second, because of its rich fertile soils, it serves as the 'bread basket' of the area. As a result the culture of Weh is influenced by the cultures of either traders or travellers. Thirdly, this village was chosen because it has a patrilineal descent system and more so, because it has beliefs and traditional practice that seem to affect the development of female adolescents.

Population

The target population for this study constituted all female adolescents between the ages of 13 to 22years found in the Weh village in Fungom Sub-Division of Menchum Division of the North West Region.

Table 1- Distribution of Target Population according to Quarters in the Weh Village

Quarter	Number of female adolescents
Azor	68
Kefum	70
Keghe	55
Mbaukusu	83
Owert	65
Total	341

Source: Quarter heads of Weh village.

This population was chosen because at this developmental level are found female adolescents who according to Piaget(1973) are in the formal operational period and are capable of describing themselves in terms of abstract values, beliefs and attitudes (Damon and Hart, 1982) cited in Meece (1997 p. 328). Also at this age range, female adolescents in the Weh village can marry and they have acquired the notion of

material possessions.

In this study however, we had two types of human populations that were randomly selected. The first one was made up of female adolescents (181) that we termed the experimental group and the second was made up of 10 adults (5 men and 5 women) that we called the control group. We chose to collect data from both adult men and women because according to William (1987) adolescent girls do not only imitate adult women but they also imitate adult men.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling technique was used to make sure that the entire female adolescent had equal chances of being selected. To select our sample, since we worked quarter by quarter, we also selected our sample in the respective quarters. To do this we adopted the following procedure: When we got to a quarter for instance, we first went to the quarter head who helped to direct us to the households in which our target population was found. We went out, first, to bring them together after taking permission from their parents. For each quarter, 40 female adolescents were needed for our sample, so after bringing together say 50 of them, we then used simple random sampling technique to select the 40 female adolescents. However, under normal circumstances we were to work with 200 female adolescents but we ended up working only with 181 of them. Two adults, one man and one woman were randomly selected from each quarter to form the sample of those who were interviewed.

Research Instruments

We used the questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion to collect our data on the field.

Validation of the instruments

To obtain the validity of the instrument that measured the self-concept, we correlated Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem standardised test with the self-concept instrument that we constructed. In addition, a pilot study was done on 10 female adolescents from Weh who were similar to the target population but resident in Wum. When the copies

of the questionnaires were collected they were carefully examined and the responses indicated that the items were not ambiguous and were relevant to the objectives of the study. This assured the external validity of the questions. An item-by-item analysis revealed some consistency in the responses. Simple frequency counts were used to determine the reliability percentage.

Data Analysis Techniques

The main statistical instrument that we employed to test our research hypotheses was the Pearson Product Moment correlation. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the data analysis. While percentages mean and standard deviation was used for the descriptive statistics, the ANOVA and Pearson Product Moment correlation was employed for the inferential statistics. In this section results are presented on tables and brief explanations made below. The first five tables present results on age, quarter, religion, marital status, and schooling.

Table 3: Distribution of female adolescents by age

Age range		Frequency	Percentage
	11-15	59	32,6
	16-20	63	34,8
	21-25	59	32,6
	Total	181	100,0

Table 4: Distribution of female adolescents by Quarter of Residence

Quarter of		Frequen	Percentage
	Azor	36	19,9
	Kefum	38	21,0
	Keghe	35	19,3
	Mbaukusu	37	20,4
	Owert	35	19,3
	Total	181	100,0

Table 6: Distribution of female adolescents with respect to Marital Status

Marital Status		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	married	55	30,4
	single	126	69,6
	Total	181	100,0

Interpretation of Results and Discussion

The results presented here are based on the data collected on female adolescents' landownership, Participation in decision making, access to inheritance of property, access to education and self-concept.

Land ownership and Self-concept of female adolescents

The analysis of the data on self-concept of female adolescents and land ownership gave a calculated Pearson's correlation value of (0.134) which is greater than the p-value (0.05) so we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis, hence concluding that landownership has no significant negative effect on self-concept of female adolescents.

This finding gives credence to Vygotsky's (1978) theory in which he reveals that children inherit their culture and the Social learning theory (Bandura, 1986). This is because as children grow up their parents, capable peers and older siblings guide the way the adolescent girls think and behave. They make sure that their thought and behaviours tie up with the cultural practice of an ideal Weh woman. Although the fact that the customary practice of this village undermines the ability of the female adolescents to own land and enjoy the privileges that are linked to it in the village of Weh, no woman dares to speak out. Observations and interviews 'reveal that they prefer to suffer in silence because they believe that something evil may befall them if they express themselves. The result is the way it is, again, because most female adolescents in Weh could not aspire to land ownership because they had no models of women in the village they said which could motivate them to follow suit. This view of theirs is in harmony with what (Maslow, 1968) theory says. To begin with, they have not seen any elderly woman in the Weh village who owns a land of her own that they can cite as an example that they want to emulate. More to that another explanation is that, the adolescent girls in this community are ignorant and wanted as much as possible to avoid any confrontations that will result due to their attempts to go against the norms of the tradition.

Negative feed-backs that the female adolescent received during early development could also account for this result (Marion, 1999) He established that during development positive feed-back reinforces the child's self-concept development positively and vice versa.

The results diverges with the views of Wiley et al (1998) for them possibility to own land had an impact on ones self-concept because according to them having a sense of material possession made one to

develop a positive self-concept. The fact that not being able to own land had no effect on the self-concept of female adolescents of We, could be explained by the fact that the girls have modelled the behaviour of their mother who is dependent on their father and his relatives (Bandura, 1986). She knows she can use land to cultivate her crops but she does not have to own. For her it is like that. *Since I grew up I have never seen a woman owning a piece of land* (adolescent girl, 16years).

For her, like those who filled the questionnaires, it is a cultural practice and so they have accepted it as their mothers have accepted there no problem. Owning land does not disturb their personality because though the men control the land, when it is planting season the women are always being shown where they will cultivate their crops. That is why land ownership had no impact on their self-concept

Participating in decision making and Self-concept of female adolescents

The analysis of the data on self-concept of female adolescents and participating in decision making gives a calculated Pearson's correlation value of (0.003) which is less than the p-value (0.05) so we reject the null hypothesis and we accept the alternative hypothesis with conclusion that participating in decision making has a significant negative link on the self-concept of female adolescents.

This result gives credence to Erikson's (1968) theory coincides with that of Canfield (1990) findings on the ways of enhancing student's self-concepts. Allowing the adolescent girls to participate in decision making instead of refusing them was found to impact positively on their self-concept.

Being involved in decision making has a psychological impact on the personality of an individual in the society. This is because it favours the dissemination and obedience to the decision. But interviews that were carried out amongst certain elderly women revealed that women were under-represented in decision making bodies; for example, in the *ndau-tse* no woman is represented and in the village council only 5 women are represented, as opposed to their higher percentage (55%) of the population in Weh village. This results really shows that in the women negative self-concept, they feel they are less than the man for

example one lady in her story said, *if I were to be born again I will choose to come as a man and not a woman. (Adult woman, 39 years)*. From this speech we can deduce that the Weh female adolescents have a very negative self-esteem as compared to the man. It is verified that if they had the possibility of intervening and speaking for themselves they will do so because this opportunity is not given to ‘them’, they remain in their corners feeling really withdrawn. Participating in decision making, places one in a comfortable position of obeying the decision that is made, but we realised in ‘, Weh that most of the female adolescents were not happy with their situation in the village but no one dared to say anything because they fear the unknown. Though the women went to; Beijing in 1995 to seek for equality between men and women about these issues it is surprising, that things seem not to change in this village. However in many households I saw young girls’, carrying out certain decisions about jobs in the home even when they were not instructed to do so. Personal observations and interview show that young girls took certain decisions to do: certain things in the house just please their mothers on her return from the farm. Therefore depriving them from participating in decision making greatly affects their self-concepts negatively.

Access to inheritance of property and Self-concept of female adolescents

The analysis of the data on access to inheritance of property and self-concept of female,’ adolescents reveal a Pearson’s correlation value of (0.207) which is greater than the p-value (0.05), we therefore accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis and conclude that, the access to inheritance of property has no significant negative effect on self- concept of female adolescents.

This result corresponds with what Mme. Bame (39 years) says, *‘Women in the Weh culture are considered as property and property cannot inherit property’*. The result corresponds with what the belief of the people that the adolescent girls will one day marry and leave their fathers compound to that of their husbands. And it is that inheritance right that the husband acquires over the girl at marriage that makes her to become his property. From the field we had an interview with only one

woman who said to us that she was the only woman who has ever inherited her father's property in the Weh village. We saw it as an isolated case because the cultural practice of Weh still resists it. Besides, the difficulty that this woman narrated to us that she is facing was enough evidence to make us understand how hard the men are fighting to put the women behind the scenes irrespective of their competence. This woman never asked to make her his successor but her father saw her competent enough to succeed him. I think one thing we can draw from this result is that, the Weh men should not only struggle to support a culture blindly, they should also try to be objective in their judgements concerning cultural practices.

The result again could be interpreted as the female adolescents internalising this cultural practice and making it a standard of right behaviour such that it had no influence on their self-concept (Bandura, 1986).

Access to education and self-concept of female adolescents

The analysis of data on self-concept of female adolescents and the girl's access to education reveal a correlation value of (0.000) less than the p-value (0.05) hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that access to education has a significant negative link to self-concept of female adolescents.

This result is in line with what Dweck and Gillard (1975) cited in Kleinke (1991, p. 51) who observed, that their low access is due to their lack of the ability to study than boys. It also reflects the belief that female adolescents have of their self-concepts, that is, the woman's role in the society is only to deliver children and take care of them. Result converges with (Imam, et al., 1997) findings that adolescent girls' poor access to education was due to the fact that men were considered as bread winners of the family and as such should go to school while the girls remain at home and carry out their traditional female role.

Results also tie up with Patricia Deguire, from Canada in an online discussion for the review of Beijing + 10 (UNESCO/UNICEF) who have also realised women's poor access to education in other countries such as India and African countries are taking proactive steps towards economic empowerment by setting up female-only banks and

businesses.

This result makes us to understand that education is becoming an important aspect in the self-concept of the female adolescent in Weh such that any female adolescent who acquires it feels fine about herself and develops a positive self- concept and anyone who does not acquire it feels bad about herself and develops a negative self-concept. It would seem every female adolescents dream is to continue her education after primary school especially now that two new schools have been opened in Weh village, yet the choice depends on her parents who more often disappoint the females by showing preference to boy-child education. Although two new schools have been opened in the village, that is, a Technical College and a Government secondary school, this situation has not changed much as from the focus group discussion the female adolescents made us to understand that most girls who attempt to go to secondary school drop out immediately they find someone who can marry them so that they can go and deliver children to maintain the family line of their parents. The percentage of parents who accept that their girl child should continue to secondary and high school is still very small compared to those who don't (30%) though these schools have been opened right in the village. This is because a majority of the men who were interviewed felt that sending a girl child further to school after primary school was a waste of time. Some felt it was a way of helping the man who will marry her because a woman in Weh is considered as a stranger because her parents know that one day she will go as a *mother, I don't have any difficulty even though I did not go to school.*"(adult, woman). This woman who is a model for her daughter doesn't see any problem with her self-concept though she never went to school. For her a girl child should not go to school too much. She should get marry early to maintain the family line of her parents and grandparents. Her thought diverges from our results because she still wants her daughter to maintain the traditional feminine role of child birth. "*Grandparents believed that girls are of no use educationally. They believed that they are meant for the home and child birth.*" Some female adolescents revealed to us during the focus group discussion that they had a lot of problems in the village with their aunties and uncles when they did not get marry very early. It was a big

problem because each time people saw them they kept asking who their husbands were. For them it is as if their only reason of living is to get marry and deliver children. *"No matter how much education you give to a woman, she will one day end up in someone's kitchen and all her needs will be catered for."* (Female adolescent) This adolescent's speech still continues to emphasize the traditional female role which does not tie with the results obtained.

Results tie up with the Changing times (Vygotsky, 1981) where many more adolescent girls are showing interest to go to school. Adolescent girls nowadays are seeing women over the television performing different roles and so is motivating most of them to go to school in order to acquire those roles. It is for this reason that we can find girls in Weh village today of 20 years or even 22 years old who were still going to school. We even saw some in their husband's houses with children but still struggling to go to school all this to keep up with the changing times. Besides, Weh village is not a closed system; people are travelling in and out of Weh; as they go and come too, they learn new things from other environments which affect their self-concepts and those of others around them especially the females. The results obtained could also be interpreted as an influence from the position of Weh as a junction village receiving from other cultures.

"The boy is the breadwinner; therefore he must be given the best opportunities right from the beginning, including the best education. This will enable him to perform his manly duties properly in the future." (Papa, Solomon) This papa through his speech is confirming this finding because he feels education which is identified as a cultural practice of the Weh people should only be for the males and not for the females. In Weh village we discovered that women were too dependent on their husbands and we want to believe that is the reason why they do not want this tradition to be broken. The interview analysis revealed to us that, some men feared to send their girl child to school because they did not want her to be enlightened and turn against the tradition. The result shows that not having the access to an education created a negative impact in the female adolescent's self-concept. To confirm it one adolescent girl age 18 years said, *"I cannot get married now; my parents want me to get married, since I finished my school I have been crying to my father that I want go to*

secondary school he is only refusing. From her speech it is clear she does not have easy access to secondary school she wants to go but her father will not allow her to go. Her doing everything to also go means that she wants to maintain a positive view of herself.

Some of the girls in the focus group were dropouts and some already married with children. *One married adolescent age 20 years with two children said I had no choice when I completed my primary school my father just said to me school has ended for me like that.*

Her going to get married was not a wilful act but because the father hindered her from continuing. Responding that if she had the opportunity to go to school even now she will do it shows that she is not satisfied with her personality now as a housewife and mother without furthering her education. She is regretting why she got married at that early age. Her behaviour ties up with the result of the findings.

For one dropout 39 years, *I dropped out from primary school. My parents wanted me to go to school but I did not want it. I wanted instead to go and get married.*

The speech of this adult want reflects the quantitative results because she did not see her that need to go to school. She knows that her role is to get married immediately she is of age. She was just behaving following the norms of the Weh culture that is why no one saw anything wrong with the behaviour to help her. She had internalised the culture to be part her personality (Vygotsky, 1978).

Conclusion

Based on the above results, we conclude:

- Land ownership has no significant negative relation on self-concept of female adolescents.
- Participation in decision making has a significant negative link to self-concept of female adolescents.
- Access to inheritance of property has no significant negative relation on self-concept of female adolescents.
- Access to education has a significant negative link to self-concept of female adolescents.

Recommendations

From the study we noticed that the two hypotheses rejected are materially oriented (land ownership and inheritance of property) and therefore tend to have no influence on the self-concept of female adolescents. Participating in decision making has an implication for the self-concept of female adolescents. The female child is highly involved in decision making from childhood, by the care she gives to her younger siblings, cooking food for the family, cleaning the house and many other things that she does even when she is not asked to do them, but this has been silent. We also realised that access to education was very important to the self-concept of the female child. It helps to develop her economic capacity. On the basis of this, the following recommendations are addressed to parents, educational planners, and the Weh society in particular.

To parents:

Parents should give equal access to education to both boys and girls. The more the female children are educated the more development they will bring in the Weh village; since the women occupy a higher percentage (54.2) of the population of Weh village against 45.8% of the men.

To the educational planners:

Enhance policies that promote equity and equality in access to education at all levels.

To the Weh community:

- Gender sensitive pedagogy should be developed for retention
- The society should increase the number of women who participate in decision making in the village
- Though our results show that landownership and access to inheritance of property had no influence on the self-concept of female adolescents, it is strongly recommended that women be given the possibility to own land and inherit property. Being members of the family they also have that right to share in the material wealth of the

family. It will not only empower them economically but will also give them some security.

-Some of the cultural practices should be reviewed especially those that discriminate and marginalize the woman.

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Women on the Pulpit: Pushing the Frontiers of Feminist Participation in Pentecostal Groups in Cameroon

By
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Abstract

Although women constitute a major force in the numerical strength of most religious groups, they usually play a less significant leadership role in these bodies. Debate on religion and feminism usually settle on the fact that religion and especially the mainstream religions are not only patriarchal, but largely male-dominated. This chapter demonstrates how women are benefitting from their acceptability and their rising mobility in Pentecostal Churches (a brand of Christianity different from the historical Catholic, Protestant and Baptist Churches) to occupy areas which had been solely preserved for the men in the older Christian churches. It is about pushing the frontiers of feminist participation in Pentecostal groups. We have demonstrated in this chapter that, Pentecostal groups in Cameroon have largely encouraged female leadership. The new involvement of women in these new groups has greatly promoted the growth of Christianity in the Country.

Key Words: Women, Frontiers, Pentecostal Groups

Résumé

Malgré le fait que les femmes se constituent en majorité dans la plupart des groupes religieux, elles jouent un rôle de leadership dans ces groupements. Les débats sur la religion et le féminisme se situent sur le fait que les religions dominantes ne sont pas seulement patriarcales

mais aussi, elles sont largement dominées par les hommes. Cet article, démontre comment les femmes tirent profit de leur montée en puissance dans les Eglises pentecôtistes (une branche du christianisme différente des églises historique telles que l'Eglise Catholique, Protestante et l'Eglise Baptiste) pour occuper des positions qui étaient autrefois réservées uniquement aux hommes dans les Eglises. Tout cela a pour objectif de repousser les frontières de la participation féministe dans les groupes pentecôtistes. Nous démontrons à travers cet article qu'en général, les groupements pentecôtistes au Cameroun encouragent le leadership féminin. L'engagement renouvelé des femmes dans ces groupes a grandement influence la croissance du christianisme dans le pays.

Mots Clés: Femmes, participations, frontières, groupements pentecôtistes.

Introduction

The last decade of the 20th Century witnessed an unprecedented growth of new Christian groups in Cameroon. It marked the height of new religiosity in the country with the proliferation of the Pentecostals, a new Christian Movement made up of several denominations, ministries, Para-churches and revival groups. This brand of Christianity remains the fastest growing in Christianity. Unlike in most world's religions and especially Christianity, where leadership positions were and are still largely imbalance in favour of the male folk, women are taking advantage of their acceptability in the Pentecostal groups to break barriers, thereby rolling boarders established in the older Christian groups in Cameroon.

The Pentecostals were and are still made up of three different categories: the Orthodox (Holiness Movement), the Classical and the Neo-Pentecostals (liberals). These various Pentecostal types arrived the country in waves. The first wave was made up of the classical, then the orthodox and lastly the liberals or Neo-Pentecostals, who greatly benefitted from the 1990 Laws of Liberty that opened the democratization process in Cameroon. Though the older Pentecostal

types from their inception greatly restricted female participation in leadership roles, in a whole, women are occupying space and expanding the frontiers of their involvement in these new Pentecostal groups.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section looks at the role women occupied in the Holiness Movement or Orthodox Pentecostal churches. The second treats the beginning of the upward mobility of women in leadership position amongst the Classical Pentecostals. The third and the last section shows prominent female actors who have successfully broken down the barriers established against women (thereby rolling back frontiers) and thus setting a pace for women to occupy positions which were no go zones for women in the past.

Feminist Participation in Orthodox Pentecostalism

Many scholars of Pentecostalism agree that there were and are basically two main groups found in the Pentecostal Movement, namely; the Classical Pentecostals and the Liberal Pentecostals⁹¹¹. However, authors like Allan Anderson, see the African Initiated Churches as part of the Pentecostal Movement that preceded the modern form of Pentecostalism that began in Azusa on 1st January 1901.⁹¹² However, in this study, we shall look basically at the Classical or mainstream Pentecostals and the Charismatic or Neo-Liberal Pentecostals. Under the Classical Pentecostals we have further divided the group into Orthodox Pentecostals and Semi-Classical. The changing views of women and leadership are expressed in the various Pentecostal types.

Most Pentecostals referred to as Classical Pentecostals trace their origin to the Azusa Street Revival that took place in the United States of America. Emerging principally from the Black minority group, William Seymour, considered as the father of modern Pentecostalism,

of, these scholars include Denzil Miller, S.M. Burgess and G.B. McGee.

⁹¹¹Knorr et Al.Fuli Gospel p. 8. Burgess and McGee, Dictionary ofPentecostals,p.16.

⁹¹²Issacson, Growth of Deeper Life, p

was part of the poor class in the U.S. The Holiness Movement that preceded the Pentecostal Movement from which Pentecostalism had its roots, laid emphasis on sanctification that discouraged members from several pleasures.

Orthodox Pentecostalism laid much emphasis on the dressing styles of its members. Dress codes were imposed on members. In groups like the Deeper Life Bible Church, there were particular dresses prescribed to their followers. Women were not allowed to put on high heeled shoes.⁹¹³ The men as well had particular shoes that they were allowed to put on. It was equally forbidden for women to put on trousers. Amongst the Orthodox Pentecostals, women were not also allowed to use lipsticks or paint their nails. They were also forbidden from partaking in other acts of “worldliness” like the putting on of earrings and bangles. Though plaiting was permitted in some Orthodox Pentecostal churches, women were not permitted to use artificial hair.

The putting on of hairs scarf by women was compulsory in these Orthodox Pentecostal churches during worship session. In the Deeper Life Bible Church, women were forbidden from exposing their hair

⁹¹³S_{erving} God “Full Time” simply meant that those who had a call from God had to abandon any secular activity to serve God. Most often those who believed to have had calls went for training in Pentecostal Bible schools. Some of these schools were in Cameroon around the major towns and cities while others were found in Nigeria. Several Cameroonians were trained in Nigerian Bible schools. Others held that there was no need for such trainings given’ that God who called them to serve, had already trained them before ever calling them to serve him as “Full Time”, Some of those who held that they have been called by God started Pentecostal churches while others joined existing, Pentecostal churches. However, some of those who climbed they were called, simply used this as a means of livelihood given that in some Pentecostal churches like the Full Gospel and the Apostolic Churches those who graduated from the bible schools owned by these denominations were given local congregations to lead and they received allowances of these groups and from the followers.

even in public places out of the church premises.⁹¹⁴

The uniqueness of Orthodox Pentecostalism stands out clearly in its views on women and leadership. The first Pentecostal groups arrived in Cameroon in the 1940s and 1950s in a backdrop where the position of women and leadership had greatly reduced. The early Pentecostal groups that came to Cameroon (Apostolic Church, the True Church of God and the Full Gospel Mission, restricted the role of women to that of followers and listeners). Although the Deeper Life and the Christian Missionary Fellowship came to the lamplight in the history of Pentecostalism in an era that the Women Movement had been greatly revived due to the four major international conventions organised under the auspices of the United Nation Organisation, these Pentecostal groups did not differ much from the two preceding groups that earlier operated in Cameroon.” This was simply because both groups were splinter organisations that came out of the two major preceding groups, the Apostolic Church and the Full Gospel Mission. While the Deeper Life Bible Church split from the Apostolic Church in Nigeria, the Christian Missionary Fellowship separated from the Full Gospel Mission in 1986⁹¹⁵

⁹¹⁴However, the treatment of women in the Deeper Life Bible Church was equally influenced by Kumuyi's perception of women. Highly influenced by the teachings of Charles Finney, the 1800 century revivalist, who had a fail .married life, he did not see the importance of women and of even getting married. This stopped several men within this group from getting married when the group just began. It was not until Kumuyi himself later got married the some of these men followed his example and took wives for themselves.

⁹¹⁵Interview with Pastor Salomon. In 2006, the Full Gospel Mission sent a secular in which it categorically barred women from aspiring to become pastor. However, the Full Gospel trained women in the Full Gospel Bible Institution in Nkwen, Bamenda as pastors but upon graduation, these women were not allowed to lead as pastors only in women and children's groups within the Full Gospel Mission. Most Pentecostal churches that held the view that women should not occupy leading roles like in becoming pastors, based their arguments from Paul's Epistles to Timothy when he admonished Timothy by saying that Let the women learn in silence with all subjection Bit I suffer not a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over a man, but to

Even though in many Orthodox Pentecostal Churches women were allowed to manifest ‘spiritual gifts like healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues, they were not allowed to take key positions in the church. Based on Paul’s theology that women were not to speak in church, women were deprived of key leadership roles like leading a congregation?’⁹¹⁶ The justification expressed by Paul why women should not preach is greatly, expressed by the traditional feminist who propound that women were and are seen as irrational, emotional and weak. Paul argued that women are weaker vessels and that it was Eve that was deceived and not Adam. This literary application of scriptures was further reinforced by theologians of Orthodox Pentecostalism, who impliedly expressed the view that women cannot handle positions of leadership because none of the twelve apostles who walked with Christ was a woman. Consequently, in this set up, women were not allowed to preach in their congregations. Pastor Salomon of the True Church of God explains why women were not supposed to preach or participate in other leadership positions in some Pentecostal Churches in Cameroon. In his words:

‘Lorsque Dieu nous donne l’instructions par rapport à l’église au Cameroun, il ne nous a pas dit qu’une femme devait être pasteur. C’est pour cela que on n’ordonne pas une femme comme Pasteur d’une église a Vraie Eglise de Dieu au Cameroun’.⁹¹⁷

remain in silence. For Adam was first then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression. First Timothy 1:10-14. Also Pentecostals who subscribed to this theology argued that amongst the twelve disciples Christ walked with on his early day, none was a woman. To them, women could be an evangelist that is preached to men who were non-Pentecostals but were not allowed to baptize those they preached to.

⁹¹⁶Interview with Pastor Salomon. See Human Right Mechanism appendix 6 B and see how it conflicts with the rights of women.

⁹¹⁷Interview with Chantal Yologaza, Bishop Bethel Chapel, 40 years, interviewed on 6th May 2009.

From the foregoing submission, it therefore, implied that the highest leadership role a woman could occupy in such a congregation was that of a pastor's wife or a Deaconess, which was third in the hierarchy of a local congregation.

Rolling Back Feminist Frontiers in Classical Pentecostalism

Between 1960 and 2005, most Pentecostal churches that began totally as Orthodox Pentecostals gradually shifted to Classical Pentecostals. This change slightly affected the role of women and the public ministration. This change also involved a major change in the belief systems of these groups. Some of these Pentecostal groups were the Full Gospel Mission and the Apostolic Church. Several reasons accounted for this change. Leadership in these groups was not permanent as leaders were constantly replaced. As new leaders emerged, they came with different perceptions and new ideas. The changing political and socio-economic conditions equally compelled some of these churches to adapt and adopt new doctrines. Within the Classical Pentecostals, the frontiers of feminist participation were gradually expanded. The activities of women crossed borders to areas which were hitherto the sole preserve of the men. The appearances of women in leadership positions and public appearances were much more evident. This change expresses the views held by Liberal feminists that women have to go public so as to enjoy some of the privileges with the men. In both the Apostolic Church of Cameroon and the Full Gospel Mission, unlike before, women were permitted to coordinate worship sessions. They were and are now allowed to translate during church meetings from English into French and vice versa. Full Gospel Mission began accepting the training of female pastors in the Full Gospel Bible Institute in Bamenda, an institution which was made only for the men in the past. . These female pastors serve as ministers to women and children. However, female pastors are not allowed to serve as resident pastors of congregations (assemblies).

Women in Neo- Pentecostal Churches

Pentecostal groups in Cameroon that belonged to this Pentecostal type were the Redeemed Church of God, the Christ Embassy, The Living Word Fellowship, and Abundant Life Fellowship International and other Para-church groups like the Cameroon Youths for Jesus. These charismatic groups traced their origin to the 1950s in the United States of America.

In Neo Pentecostal Churches, the barriers preventing women from occupying key leadership positions were greatly reduced, thereby, rolling back the frontiers and letting women occupy positions which were elsewhere the preserve of the men folk. Women in this category of Pentecostal churches preached, taught, baptised and officiated marriage ceremonies and also served as full time resident pastors in local congregations. As a matter of fact, in these Pentecostal types, women married to male pastors had almost the same authority with their husbands. In Light House Chapel International in Yaounde, they were referred to as Lady Pastors. The arguments of theologians of Neo Pentecostal groups why women should take up leadership roles were based mainly on the biblical text of Joel 2: 28. In this text, God promised that in the last days, before the Second coming of Christ He was going to pour his Spirit upon all flesh (both male and female) and that both men and women were to prophecy (or teach). They also argue that the first person Christ appeared to after resurrection was a woman and not a man. These new theological developments greatly bridged the gap in feminist involvement in Pentecostal groups. It has led to the emergence of prominent female actors who have contributed greatly in rolling back the frontiers in spaces occupied only by men in older religious groups.

In the city of Yaounde, Chantal Yolo Gaza of the Bethel Chapel serves as a model of women who have been able to break down barriers and moved to areas previously handled just by men in religious groups in Cameroon. Born on the 25th of July 1969 at Enongal around Ebolowa in the South Region of Cameroon, to a Presbyterian family, Louise Mfoumou Chantal got married to Jonas Yolo Gaza, working with the Bank of Central African States who later on turned to

Pentecostalism Maintaining her Presbyterian membership and sceptical of the new Pentecostal Movement, she only joined her husband several years later in 1991 during a brief visit to France where she professed to have accepted Christ as her Lord and Saviour.⁹¹⁸

Baptised in 1992 in a house fellowship founded by her husband, she immediately joined the rank of leadership as the pastor's wife. She took up other responsibilities like leading in the choir and supervising the activities of this group that turned into a full Pentecostal Church in March 1992 and was located at the Elig-Essono neighbourhood found in the city of Yaounde. She was greatly influenced by the sermons of Pentecostal preachers like Benny Hinn and Morris Cerrulo of the United States and Archbishop Benson Idahosa of Nigeria during some of their seminars that she attended.

Chantal Yolo Gaza founded sub-groups like Bon Samaritan, a non-profit making and nongovernmental organization at the service of the less privileged like orphans and leprosy patients and *Les Merveilles Femmes*, a group within Bethel Chapel that encouraged female talent. She contributed greatly to the establishment of the *Festival Annuel de Musique Chretienne* (FESTAMUC), an annual four-day Pentecostal festival that held every December and that brought together Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals from several churches.⁹¹⁹ She preached in her local congregation and participated in several radio and television programs.

Her musical album titled *Dieu m'a Excuse* released in 1999, publicized her as a Pentecostal pastor and also brought criticisms from other Pentecostal pastors who refuted as unbiblical the ordination of women as pastors.⁹²⁰ Her husband's transfer to Bangui, automatically

⁹¹⁸Ibid

⁹¹⁹Discussion with Pastor Ntamarck, Pastor of Full Gospel Mission Tsinga, Yaounde who strongly criticised the idea of women becoming pastors.

⁹²⁰Profile International. Neo Pentecostals who encouraged women into taking leadership position were influenced by leading Pentecostal female preachers like Katherine Khruman, Aimee Semple McPherson, Paul White, Juanita. Bynum (An African American female Pentecostal who greatly influenced African Pentecostal women through her books and tapes) (See also Dictionary of Pentecostal and

made her the senior pastor of Bethel Chapel. In 2008, Pastor Chantal Yolo Gaza was conferred the title of Bishop by some Pentecostal ministers in Yaounde. The title made her one of the highest ranking authorities of the Bethel Chapel, a position that was held only by her husband, Bishop Apostle Jonas Yolo Gaza. Pastor Chantal Yolo Gazas activities and leadership position show to what extent women were able to roll back frontiers and take positions which were no go zones for women in the historic Roman Catholic, Protestant and Baptist and even the early Pentecostal groups which came to Cameroon.

Not only were women pastors in some Pentecostal groups, some created and led Pentecostal Churches. This greatly expressed some of the ideas of radical feminists who believe that for equality to be achieved, women have to separate and form different structures in order to occupy leadership positions which they have been deprived of by the men in religious groups. A good example was Rev. Angela Acha Morfaw, the founder of Abundant Life International. After living in Nigeria for seventeen years, she returned to Cameroon and began a Pentecostal Church in the city of Yaounde in 1993.⁹²¹ She brought foreign preachers who propagated the prosperity and faith formula doctrine. Her yearly program titled Night of Wonder, publicized on street walls, banners and hand bills, was a meeting point for several

charismatic Movement.) Several conferences were international conferences were organized by the Pentecostal women in Cameroon both by Cameroonian and non-Pentecostal to challenge and encourage female Pentecostals to take leadership role in the Pentecostal circles. To make their argument more solid why women had to take leadership roles, charismatic or neo Pentecostals argue that the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Which laid the foundation of the Pentecostal Movement) made in Joel 2: 28 and which fulfilled was in Acts 2:1-4 was for both male and female. They also pointed to other biblical female figures like Rebecca who led Israel to defeat the Assyrians as a sign that God was interested in making use of women in His service. They also held that although Christ did not select a female to be part of the twelve, he however revealed himself first to a woman when he resurrected from the death. Arguments by Angela Acha Morfaw on Cameroon Radio and Television on a Radio Program titled Woman To Woman.

⁹²¹Profile International p. 16.

ministers and a forum for Pentecostal dialogue and unity.

It was through this forum that she raised funds to build one of the prestigious Pentecostal Church structures in Yaounde. Rev. Acha Morfaw did not only incorporate the feminist view of equality, women getting into the highest leadership positions but also some of the extremist views of feminism, those who see marriage especially in Africa as slavery imposed by men on women.⁹²²

Odile Ngaska has not only played a leading role in the spread of Pentecostalism in the urban centres of Cameroon but serves as an example of women who have been able of breaking down barriers and occupying areas not allowed for women in the older Christian churches. Her history demonstrates how she has been able to roll back these frontiers. Born at Saa in the Lekie Division in the Centre Region of Cameroon, she attended Ecole Saint Coeur at Saa and later on moved to Lycee Leclerc where she obtained her 'Baccalaureate' Certificate and later on studied at the University of Yaounde where she obtained a degree in the French Language and gained admission into the Higher Teacher's Training College to qualify as a French teacher.⁹²³ Odile Ngaska participated in the spread of Pentecostalism through her various musical albums and through participation in both religious and non-religious programs. Her first musical album titled *Albu* was released in 1996 and by 2007, she had five musical albums. She played a determinant role in spreading Pentecostal songs using the Cameroon media. Some of the secular media houses through which Odile Ngaska brought Pentecostalism into the lamplight were the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), Canal 2, and STV.

Her activities with a non- Pentecostal group like the Singers Fellowship, helped to spread Pentecostal music and Pentecostalism. She made gospel music and especially Pentecostal songs, to compete with other secular songs in Cameroon by taking gospel music out of

⁹²²Interview with Odile Ngaska, Pentecostal Gospel Singer, aged about 50 years, interviewed on the 6th of May 2009

⁹²³Interview with Ngaska

the church to the media⁹²⁴. In 2003, Ngaska created a musical training centre called *Alamba* or “lamp” (in the Beti dialect).

She received several awards, especially from some media houses. These included the Radio Tiemeni Awards (RTS), the Canal D’or Awards (from Canal 2), Cameroon Politics Awards, Excellence Africaine, Excellence Musical, Palme D’or de Excellence Africaine and the Prestigious Awards. In 2008, she was made the president of the Cameroon Music Corporation known as the *Societe Camerounaise de l’art Musical* (SOCAM). Odile Ngaska took Pentecostalism to the media through songs. Such an initiative that was believed in the past could only be taken by the men folk of most Christian groups.

The Wailing Women, an interdenominational Pentecostal group was another female group through which Pentecostalism was and is still being promoted in Cameroon. Founded by Mosy Madugba, a Nigerian Pentecostal preacher, the main focus of the group was rallying women to pray for the nations. In this group, the thoughts of male feminist were expressed since this group ‘was founded by a man. Feminist participation in Pentecostal groups in Cameroon was greatly widened in that in the several international conferences, seminars and workshops organised by this group, women took active part in preaching and teaching. Some of the guest speakers of such programs were Pentecostal female preachers from Nigeria and other parts of the world.’⁹²⁵ Through this, women in Pentecostal Churches in Cameroon were able to move beyond the frontiers of women sitting just on the pew. Through their activities, many women came to occupy leadership positions in the various Pentecostal groups in the country. This

⁹²⁴Author’s observation especially in Yaounde during conferences organised by the Wailing Women. The Author happened to have attended one of these conferences. Teachings during such conferences are rediffused on local television houses like Elshaddai Christian Television and Jesus Television on found in Yaounde.

⁹²⁵Mosy, Neo Pentecostals argue that the Pauline doctrine of hair covering was a cultural issue. They propounded that Paul was addressing to the women at Corinth and not to the church of today. The issue of hair covering is one of the doctrines that brought differences amongst Pentecostals even though many at times there was religious tolerance amongst these groups.

facilitated the spread of Pentecostalism in the country.

Beside the leading role given to women in this Neo Pentecostal, there were no restrictions placed on them about their public appearance. Rather, women were encouraged to lay emphasis on their outlook. Hair covering in the Pentecostal Churches during worship services for them was a matter of choice. In fact, in some of these churches, hair covering was rather shunned because it was considered a practice of legalism.⁹²⁶

Conclusion

We have demonstrated from the foregoing discussion that three principal types of Pentecostal groups existed and still exist in Cameroon: the Holiness Movement (Orthodox) the Classical and the Liberals or Neo Pentecostals. The Holiness Movement Pentecostals like the historic Roman Catholic, Protestant and Baptists groups prevented women from exercising leadership roles within its set ups. This greatly affected the growth of these churches as female gifts and talents *were* restricted with numerous barriers.

On its part, the Classical Pentecostals were quite sympathetic with the leadership gifts of women within its context which made it possible to a limited extent for women to break down barriers and roll back frontiers and establish themselves in positions which for over the decades were the sole preserve of the men. Women took positions in leading in the liturgy, translating messages from English into French and vice versa. Some received pastoral training which was reserved only for the men. This multiplied their efforts in the spread of Pentecostalism in Cameroon.

Women in Neo Pentecostals were nothing but an expression of the great extent to which they were able to break hindrances and barriers and move beyond the zones in which women were confined into. In this set up, women preached, baptised, officiated marriages and trained others especially women as ministers to take up leadership roles. Apostle Chantal Yolo Gaza, Pastor Angela Acha Morfaw, Odile

⁹²⁶D. Zanga Tsogo, 1983, *Vies défermés*, Yaoundé, Clé

Gaska, the Wailing Women remain key examples of women who have moved beyond barriers and rolled back frontiers which had permitted other women to successfully occupy positions which were and are still the preserve of men in the early Pentecostal churches, but most especially amongst the historic Roman Catholic, Protestants and Baptist churches.

By increasing feminist participation in Pentecostal Groups in Cameroon, women did not only occupy more space and expanded their horizon beyond the previously established male dominated frontiers, but contributed significantly for the growth of Pentecostal groups and Christianity in the country.

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La ville, le sport et les frontières interdites aux femmes massa et toupouri du Cameroun: itinéraire sportif universitaire de Félicité Minda Vella

By
André Tassou

Résumé

Au Cameroun, les peuples massa et toupouri se trouvent, majoritairement, dans les départements du Mayo-Danya et du Mayo-Kany, dans la région de l'Extrême-Nord. Ce sont d'excellents lutteurs, de par leur éducation et/ou formation. Dans les zones rurales par exemple, sont organisés annuellement des championnats de "lutte traditionnelle" auxquels prennent exclusivement part de jeunes gens, symbole de masculinité, de bravoure et d'endurance. En ville par contre, il existe des structures d'encadrement où garçons et filles (massa, toupouri ou non) peuvent s'exprimer en matière de lutte sans que l'épineuse question du genre ne soit évoquée. Au total, la ville apparaît comme le lieu par excellence de création, de transformation et de diffusion des civilisations de tous ordres. Elle est un "tout" et, par conséquent, marque la fin de certaines frontières jadis interdites en campagne, en l'occurrence la "lutte traditionnelle".

Mots clés: Cameroun, Ville, Sport, Genre, Massa-Toupouri, Frontières

Abstract

In Cameroon, the massa and toupouri peoples mainly live in the Divisions of Mayo-Dana and Mayo-Kany in the now Far-Northern Region of Cameroon. These peoples are excellent wrestlers both by their upbringing and/or tradition. In the rural areas, for instance,

“traditional wrestling” organized annual championships exclusively reserved for young male wrestlers, a symbol to their masculinity, bravery and endurance. In cities, however, there are supervisory structures where boys and girls (massa, toupouri and otherwise) can express themselves in wrestling without the slightest evocation of the thorny gender issue. In all, the city appears as the venue per excellence for the creation, transformation and dissemination of all sorts of civilizations. The city marks the end of frontiers that formerly could not be crossed in the countryside, namely that of traditional wrestling for female actors.

Key words: Cameroon, City, Sports, Gender, Massa- Toupouri, Frontier

Introduction

La ville, le sport et le genre retiennent de plus en plus l'attention des chercheurs, au regard de leur caractère essentiellement mouvant et mobilisant de par le monde. En Afrique subsaharienne comme partout ailleurs, des barrières sociales et culturelles qui, autrefois, étaient facilement perceptibles entre les femmes et les hommes, disparaissent progressivement, eu égard aux mutations (modernisation, mondialisation, etc.) qui s'opèrent au sein de la plupart des populations. Chez les peuples massa et toupouri du Nord-Cameroun par exemple, la jeune fille bénéficie désormais des mêmes structures d'encadrement et/ou d'éducation qui, jadis, lui étaient formellement interdites: l'école moderne notamment. Il en est de même de certaines frontières physiques, sociales, religieuses, linguistiques, culturelles et mentales a lui imposées par la société; lesquelles ne sont plus facilement visibles au niveau des centres urbains, petits et/ou grands. C'est dire que contrairement à la campagne, la ville marque la fin des frontières interdites aux femmes de nombre de peuples, notamment celle du sport en général et de la “lutte traditionnelle” en particulier.

Au Cameroun par exemple, les questions liées au genre intéressent de plus en plus les scientifiques, les hommes politiques, la société civile, les Organisations Non Gouvernementales (ONG), etc. Ceci se

traduit, en partie, par l'abondance des travaux produits dans ce domaine depuis les années 1980. Il s'agit, entre autres, des travaux de Delphine Zanga Tsogo⁹²⁷, Jean Claude Barbier⁹²⁸, Simon David Yana⁹²⁹, Jean-Pierre Lachaud⁹³⁰, Anne Emmanuelle Calves et Dominique Meekers⁹³¹, Paulette Beat-Songe⁹³², etc. Malheureusement, aucun de ces auteurs n'a pu aborder la problématique du sport féminin au Cameroun qui, pourtant, reste d'actualité. Ceci étant, en quoi la ville marque-t-elle la fin de certaines frontières interdites, notamment celle de la "lutte traditionnelle" et/ou du judo? Qu'est-ce qui, en réalité, sous-tend l'interdiction du sport de combat aux femmes massa et toupouri du Cameroun? Comment Félicité Minda Vella a-t-elle pu briser ce mythe au point de devenir une championne nationale?

La réalisation de ce travail a exigé que je convoque une démarche à la fois qualitative et quantitative conséquemment, j'ai exploité trois principales sources, notamment les sources écrites, les sources orales et les documents iconographiques. Les sources écrites sont constituées d'une part des documents d'archives de l'institut Nationale de la Jeunesse et des Sports (INJS) et des délégations sportives régionales et départementales : d'autre part des ouvrages publiés, des thèses de Doctorat, des mémoires de maîtrise et des rapports de fin de formation qui traitent de la question. A ces données livresques, ont été associées des interviews que j'ai menées auprès des populations massa et toupouri, ainsi qu'auprès des encadreurs des sciences sportives en

⁹²⁷J. C. Barbier, 1985, Femmes du Cameroun, Femmes rebelles, mères pacifiques, Paris, Orstom/Karthala.

⁹²⁸S. D. Yana, 1997, Statuts et rôles féminins au Cameroun, Paris, IBISCUS CEAN.

⁹²⁹J.-P. Lachaud, 1997, Les femmes et le marché du travail urbain en Afrique subsaharienne, Paris, L'Harmattan.

⁹³⁰A. E. Calves, D. Meekers, 1997, Statut matrimonial et valeur des enfants au Cameroun, Paris, CEPED.

⁹³¹P. Beat-Songe, 1993, Sida et prostitution au Cameroun, Paris, L'Harmattan.

⁹³²A. Tassou, 2005, «Evolution historique des villes du Nord-Cameroun (XIX^e _XXe siècles) : des cites traditionnelles aux villes modernes. Les cas de Maroua, Garoua, Ngaoundéré, Mokolo, Guider et Meiganga », thèse de Doctorat/PhD d'Histoire, Université de N'Gaoundéré,

général (lutte, athlétisme, gymnastique, football, handball, etc.). Ces deux sources (écrites et orales) ont été complétées par des photos prises lors de différentes séances de combats, lesquelles sont venues illustrer l'ensemble des événements relatés.

Schématiquement, ce travail s'articule autour de trois principaux axes. Le premier axe se propose d'examiner le cadre conceptuel et théorique de l'étude. Le second présente le parcours sportif universitaire de Félicité Minda Vella de 2000 à 2004. Le troisième et dernier axe étudie les enjeux et les perspectives.

Cadre conceptuel et théorique de l'étude

Il n'est pas des tout aisés de proposer une définition du concept de "ville" qui soit admise de façon unanime, eu égard à son caractère quelque peu élastique, voire équivoque. Il existe certes des critères de définitions (critères administratif, démographique, équipements à caractères urbain, etc.) qui sont connus de tous, mais ceux-ci diffèrent le plus souvent d'un continent à un autre, d'une région à une autre, d'un pays à un autre et parfois même du niveau de développement économique. Néanmoins, par "ville", l'on peut entendre tout chef-lieu d'unité administrative dotée d'équipements à caractère urbain et comptant au moins 5000 habitants⁹³³. Bien que discutable, cette définition peut être acceptée, étant donné qu'elle tient compte des principaux critères suscités. De par ses multiples fonctions (politique, économique, socioculturelle, etc.), la "ville" est considérée par nombre d'observateurs comme un "tout" et, par conséquent, marque sans doute la fin de certaines frontières interdites aux femmes, notamment de la "lutte traditionnelle" ou de tout autre sport de combat.

De façon littérale, le "sport" peut être défini comme *l'ensemble des exercices physiques se présentant sous forme de jeux individuels ou collectifs, pouvant donner lieu à compétition et pratiques en observant certaines règles; chacune des*

⁹³³P. Maubourguet (dir.), 1995, Le Petit Larousse. Dictionnaire encyclopédique, Paris, Larousse, pp.576-577.

*formes pécuniaire de ces exercices »*⁹³⁴. Etymologiquement, le mot “sport” est d’origine anglaise; lequel est lui-même issu de l’ancien français, «déport», c’est-à-dire “divertissement”. Traditionnellement, on peut distinguer six catégories ou formes de sports, à savoir les sports athlétiques ou gymniques ; les sports de combat ou d’opposition; les sports de balle; les sports mécaniques; les sports de glisse et les sports nautiques. C’est la deuxième catégorie, le sport de combat ou d’opposition (boxe, lutte, escrime, judo, karaté et autres arts martiaux) qui fait l’objet de la présente étude: le judo ou tout « *sport de combat, dérive de jiu-jitsu, où la souplesse et la vitesse jouent un rôle prépondérant* ».⁹³⁵

Il s’agit, de façon générale, d’une méthode globale d’éducation (physique, intellectuelle et morale) dont la pratique valorise une éthique qui donne au respect des personnes, des lieux et de leur hygiène une position centrale. Ceci étant comment Félicité Minda Vella est-elle devenue judoka? Ou comment devient-on sportif? C’est en répondant à cette question que l’on se rend justement compte des difficultés liées au processus de “sportivisation” des femmes, d’où la problématique de certaines “frontières” qui leur sont interdites, de façon générale. En réalité, *«cette interrogation forte, qui sous-tend l’ensemble de l’entreprise, permet de comprendre pourquoi les femmes ont été durablement exclues de la vie sportive, et pourquoi la conquête de cette activité, judicieusement qualifiée de « citadelle masculine », a été si difficile »*⁹³⁶.

Le mot “frontière” est également difficilement définissable comme celui de “ville”. Sa définition reflète de nombreuses ambiguïtés, étant donné que nombre d’interprétations qui lui sont souvent faites évoluent dans le temps et dans l’espace, d’où son caractère quelque peu complexe, voire alambiqué. Néanmoins, le mot “frontière” viendrait de “front”, c’est-à-dire un terme militaire qui désignerait la zone de

⁹³⁴Ibid. p.574. Jiu-jitsu (mot japonais) n’est autre chose qu’un «art martial japonais, fondé sur les projections, les luxations, les étranglements et les coups frappés (atemi) sur les points vitaux du corps, et qui, codifié, a donné naissance au judo ».

⁹³⁵Clio: Histoire, femmes et sociétés [En ligne], 23/2006, mis en ligne le 13 novembre 2006. URL: <http://clio.revues.org/index1932.html>.

⁹³⁶M. Foucher, 1986. “L’invention des frontières: un modèle géopolitique française”, in Herodote-Geopolitique de La France-no 40, Paris, pp.54-88.

contact entre deux armées. C'est ce qui a sans doute fait dire à Michel Foucher que la "frontière" a une signification militaire et que tous « *les autres sons ne sont que coïncidences voulues* »⁹³⁷. Pierre Georges pense, quant à lui, que la notion de "frontière" peut signifier à la fois « *confins* », « *ligne de démarcation* » et « *barrière défensive* »⁹³⁸

La notion de frontière dans son acception primaire se réfère à des catégories d'espace (« limite d'un territoire »). Mais, elle évoque également un large ensemble des phénomènes à caractère général - comme la pensée et l'activité humaine - et devient ainsi l'objet d'une réflexion philosophique. Il existe deux significations complémentaires du mot: la frontière en tant que ligne démarcative, qui sépare un domaine d'un autre, et en tant que terme, fin, moment où l'activité finit.⁹³⁹

Toutes ces définitions, bien qu'acceptables, ne cadrent pas exactement avec la signification qu'on pourrait donner à la notion de "frontière" qui fait l'objet de la présente étude. En effet, outre les dimensions géographiques (frontières naturelles), politiques (frontières nationales, administratives) et administratives (limites régionales, communales, zones d'intervention), les "frontières" sont plus symboliques, c'est-à-dire culturelles, ethniques, générationnelles, sociales, etc.⁹⁴⁰ C'est cet aspect symbolique de la "frontière" qui doit être pris en compte dans ce travail: le social et le culturel en l'occurrence. « *La frontière, écrit Jean-Luc Plermay, ne peut être prise que comme une construction sociale, révélatrice d'une certaine réalité sociale. Cette*

⁹³⁷P. Georges, 1974, Dictionnaire de La géographie

⁹³⁸T. Kostkiewiczowa, 2007, "La question des frontières au XVIII^e siècle: approche esthétique approche littéraire in P. Ihalaïnen et al. (dir.), 2007, Frontière au XVIII^e siècle, Revue internationale d'Etudes du Dix-huitième Siècle (R1EDS), Vol. I, Helsinki & Oxford, Finlande, p.167.

⁹³⁹B. Moulin, 2001, La ville et ses frontières. De la ségrégation sociale à l'ethnisation des rapports sociaux, Karthala, Paris, p.37.

⁹⁴⁰J.-L. Plermay (2002), «Des confins aux villes frontières : l'innovation à la marge» communication à la table ronde sur « Les confins du handicap à l'innovation » tenue en janvier 2002 dans le cadre des rencontres scientifiques franco- sud-africaine de l'innovation territoriale.

dimension sociale de la frontière comme construction sociale en fait une construction vivante évoluant dans le temps »⁹⁴¹.

Ainsi par “frontières interdites” aux femmes massa et toupouri du Cameroun, il faut tout simplement entendre des “interdits” sociaux et/ou culturels dont ces dernières étaient généralement victimes. En fait, ces “interdits” semblent avoir existé ou existent encore dans certaines sociétés traditionnelles africaines. Chez nombre de peuples du Cameroun par exemple, certaines pratiques rituelles étaient jugées plus “gênées” que d’autres et, par conséquent, étaient formellement interdites aux femmes, pour des raisons parfois physiologiques. Certains rites initiatiques massa et toupouri (le *labana* et le *goni*, respectivement) ne sont, jusqu’ici, réservés qu’aux garçons. Il en est de même des pratiques sportives tels les scènes de chasse, les championnats de “lutte traditionnelle” et autres qui ne sont considérés que comme des citadelles exclusives de la masculinité. De façon générale,

certains bastions de la masculinité (sports de combat-notamment les boxes, cyclismes ou sports collectifs de grand terrain (football ou rugby), ou se mettent en scène corps males et performances viriles, sont longtemps hors d’accès pour les femmes (...). Les femmes peuvent les pratiquer sous certaines conditions, si l’effort demandé reste modéré et la pratique de L’ordre du loisir⁹⁴².

Pourquoi est-il interdit aux femmes massa et toupouri du Cameroun de pratiquer certains sports de combat, en l’occurrence la “lutte traditionnelle” et, par ricochet, le judo? Les Massa et les Toupouri (les hommes notamment) pensent que la femme est un sexe faible et, par conséquent, ne doit pas pratiquer certaines activités qui font exclusivement partie de la “citadelle masculine”. L’initiation, la

⁹⁴¹Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés [En ligne], 23/2006, mis en ligne le 13 novembre 2006. URL: <http://clio.revues.org/index 1932.html>.

⁹⁴²G. Lecoq, “Entre virilité et féminité, entre idéologie et psychologies: des masculinités sportives se révèlent incertaines” in T. Terret (dir.), 2005, La conquête d’une citadelle masculine, Vol. 1, Paris, L’Harmattan, pp.351-367.

lutte traditionnelle, la chasse, le vol, etc. sont strictement interdits aux femmes, en raison de leur sexe.

En effet, la femme est le symbole de la paix, de la cohésion sociale, voire de la docilité. Aussi incarne-t-elle la fécondité, la prodigalité en pays massa et toupouri et, par conséquent, doit être exempte des pratiques des disciplines qui pourraient perturber le bon fonctionnement de certains de ses organes physiologiques. De façon générale, le processus de “sportivisation” de la jeune fille introduirait un « *trouble dans le genre* » comme le fait savoir Gilles Lecoq⁹⁴³. C’est ce qui a sans doute fait dire à certains observateurs (les médecins en l’occurrence) que la pratique intensive du sport est contraire au « *devoir sacré* », « *incompatible avec la constitution féminine et inutile autant que nuisible à la tâche première de la vie d’une femme, la maternité* »⁹⁴⁴. Entre outre, pour les mêmes raisons (natalistes sans doute), des médecins recommandent souvent une pratique modérée du sport afin d’éviter certains dysfonctionnements de l’organisme.

Par ailleurs, Georges Hebert soutient par exemple que « *la fille qui serait développée et entraînée d’une façon aussi complète et poussée que le jeune homme pourrait se mesurer à peu près égalité avec lui* »⁹⁴⁵. C’est ce qui amène parfois nombre d’hommes à ce métier des filles qui pratiquent des activités tels le judo, la “lutte traditionnelle”, le “karaté”, etc. Mais dans bien des cas, il ne s’agit que de préjugés, voire de complexes d’infériorité souvent développés de part et d’autre au sujet de cette discipline: le sport de combat en général. C’est d’ailleurs ce que confirme Félicité Minda Vella elle-même en ces termes:

Avant de rencontrer mon mari, je pratiquais déjà le judo. Il est bien vrai qu’il recevait de temps en temps des intrigues de la part de ses amis, mais il était plutôt fier de moi et, par conséquent, m’encourageait à continuer. D’ailleurs, je savais qu’il était plus fort que moi et que personne d’entre nous n’allait être complexe. Je

⁹⁴³Cli o. Histoire, femmes et sociétés [En ligne], 23/2006, mis en ligne Le 13 novembre 2006. URL: <http://clio.revues.org/index 1932.html>.

⁹⁴⁴G. Hebert, 1941, Le code de la force, Paris, Vuibert (1^{re} édition 1910), p.41.

⁹⁴⁵Feli cite Minda Vella, entretien du 02109/2009 à Douala.

dois même avouer qu’au départ, même mes parents (en l’occurrence mon père) n’étaient pas d’accord que je pratique ce genre de sport (...)»⁹⁴⁶.

Ce témoignage montre à souhait les difficultés liées au processus de “sportivisation” de la jeune fille dans son milieu en général et à la pratique du sport de combat en particulier. Ceci étant, quelles sont les principales raisons qui ont poussé Félicité Minda Vella à pratiquer le judo? « *Dans la société massa, affirme-t-elle, c’est le plus fort qui fait toujours valoir ses droits. C’est pourquoi je voulais m’exprimer à travers la lutte (...)* ».⁹⁴⁷ Comment se présente son parcours sportif?

Du village à la ville: l’Université de Ngaoundéré comme milieu d’encadrement et d’émergence (2000-2004)

Félicité Minda Vella est née le 07 octobre 1976 à Bangana, dans le département du Mayo-Danay, région de l’Extrême-Nord, dans une famille de lutteurs⁹⁴⁸. Elle fit ses études primaires et élémentaires dans la ville de Yagoua. Ce fut depuis l’école primaire qu’elle a commencé à développer certaines aptitudes physiques; lesquelles lui ont certainement permis d’être championne nationale du judo aux jeux universitaires de 2004 à Yaoundé. Mais comment cela fut-il possible? Pratiquait-elle déjà cette discipline? Si oui, depuis quand s’adonnait-elle au sport de combat?

La “lutte traditionnelle” est la principale activité sportive pratiquée

⁹⁴⁶idem

⁹⁴⁷Félicité cite Minda Vella est d’origine massa du Cameroun. Les Massa sont un peuple réputé essentiellement dans la pratique de la lutte traditionnelle, tout comme les Toupouri. Elle est née d’un père qui, avant d’entrer dans l’armée, fut un excellent lutteur.

⁹⁴⁸Chez les Toupouri du Tchad et du Cameroun par exemple, le feu kague, communément appelé “fête du coq”, marque la fin de chaque année, C’est ainsi qu’après avoir sacrifié des coqs en mémoire des ancêtres, après avoir mangé, bu et dansé, des scènes de combat de “lutte traditionnelle” sont organisées afin de connaître les champion de chaque village, de chaque clan, de chaque région.

par les Massa et les Toupouri. En plus des championnats inter-villages organisés aux mois de mai et d'avril ou de jeunes gens dont les âges varient entre huit et trente et cinq sont mis en compétition, les fêtes de récolte et/ou de fin d'année sont souvent couronnées par des scènes de "lutte traditionnelle"⁹⁴⁹. Malheureusement, ce ne sont que les hommes qui y prennent part, exclusivement. Néanmoins, certaines jeunes filles s'exercent souvent à la lutte, étant donné que la bagarre apparaît comme l'un des moyens de résolution de la plupart des problèmes chez les Massa et les Toupouri. Dans bien des cas, elle « *(la bagarre) fait partie intégrante des éléments culturels messe, d'où ce souci permanent de former à la lutte traditionnelle au sport de combat* »⁹⁵⁰. C'est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles certaines filles massa choisissent plutôt de s'entraîner avec les jeunes garçons de leur âge à telle enseigne que nombre d'entre elles réussissent parfois à s'imposer. C'est de la même manière que Félicité Minda Vella a appris à lutter, surtout que ses meilleurs compagnons se recrutaient dans les rangs des garçons. Au total, c'est depuis l'école primaire qu'elle a commencé à s'adonner à ce type de sports de combat, bien qu'elle ne le pratiquait pas encore de façon professionnelle.

En réalité, le village n'offre aucune opportunité aux femmes massa et toupouri de pratiquer le sport de combat, étant donné qu'il n'existe aucune structure d'encadrement, traditionnelle soit-elle. Pourtant, nombre d'entre elles peuvent mieux s'exprimer dans cette discipline qui leur est formellement interdite pour des raisons plus ou moins culturelles et/ou sociales. C'est ce qui semble justifier, en partie, pourquoi Félicité Minda Vella n'a commencé à pratiquer le judo que tardivement, en 2000. Cependant, elle s'intéressait déjà depuis le secondaire à certains types de sports de balle, notamment au football, au basket, au handball et au volley-ball, bien qu'elle ne se soit pas professionnalisée. *«Je pratiquais déjà un peu de basket, de volley et du handball depuis le secondaire. Mais ce fut en 2000 que 'encadreur de l'équipe du judo de l'Université de N'Gaoundéré, monsieur Fouda, me demanda d'intégrer le groupe en*

⁹⁴⁹Feli cite Minda Vella, entretien du 02/09/2009 à Douala.

⁹⁵⁰idem

complément d'effectif (...) »⁹⁵¹. C'est ainsi qu'elle a rejoint le groupe de six filles en 2000, trois d'entre elles étant originaires de la région de l'Extrême-Nord. Parmi les six judokas ci-après que Félicité Minda Vella a rejointes en 2000, on pouvait compter deux filles toupouri et une fille massa, ce qui représentait déjà plus de 70% du nombre total. Ceci confirme l'idée selon laquelle les deux peuples (massa et toupouri) sont réputés dans la pratique de ce sport de combat: la "lutte traditionnelle" et, par ricochet, le "judo".

Photo 1 : l'équipe fille de judo de l'Université de N'Gaoundéré

Photo 1 : l'équipe fille de judo de l'Université de Ngaoundéré



Source: archives privées de Félicité Minda Vella à Douala.

Félicité Minda Vella qui fait l'objet de la présente étude est la deuxième des sept (7) dans cet alignement. Les sept (7) judokas sont alignées par ordre décroissant, c'est-à-dire du plus grand poids au plus petit. Un an après, c'est-à-dire en 2001, elle a réussi à s'intégrer dans le groupe à tel point qu'elle a pu glaner une médaille de bronze aux jeux universitaires de Douala. Bien que pratiquant parallèlement d'autres disciplines, notamment le basket, Le handball et le volley-ball, elle a été successivement médaillée d'argent en 2002 et en 2003. C'est sans doute

⁹⁵¹Félicité Minda Vella, entretien du 02109/2009 à Douala.

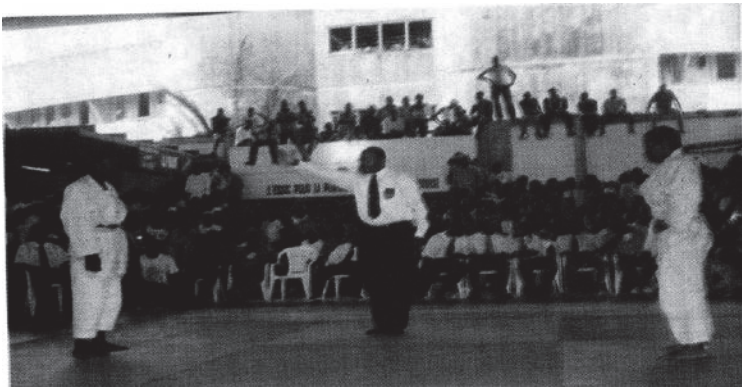
ce qui lui a fait dire qu'elle n'était qu'une amatrice du judo les trois premières années : de 2000 à 2003. Ce n'est qu'en 2004 qu'elle a dû abandonner tous les autres sports de balle pour se consacrer essentiellement au judo. C'est ainsi qu'aux jeux universitaires de Yaoundé en 2004, elle a été sacrée championne nationale après avoir vaincu toutes ses adversaires, ce qui lui a valu la médaille d'or, la seule et unique remportée par l'Université de Ngaoundéré.

Photo 2: Scène de combat, Yaoundé 2004



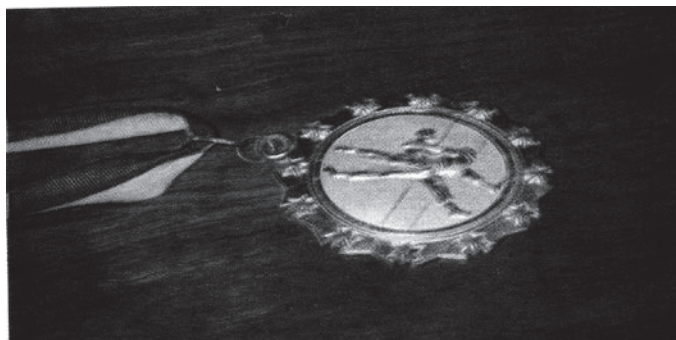
Source: archives privées de Félicité Minda Vella à Douala. Félicité Minda Vella porte la ceinture rouge.

Photo 3 : l'arbitre déclare Félicité Minda Vella victorieuse en finale, synonyme de la médaille d'or.



Source: archives privées de Félicité Minda Vella à Douala

Photo 4: la médaille d'or gagnée par Félicité Minda Vella en 2004 aux jeux universitaires de Yaoundé



Source: archives privées de Félicité Mbinda Vella à Douala

Au total, Félicité Minda Vella n'a eu que quatre années pour se hisser au sommet et se faire un nouveau nom: la championne nationale de judo. Les trois premières furent considérées, pour elle, comme des années préparatoires, de mise au point, étant donné qu'elle s'adonnait en même temps à d'autres sports de balle. Elle a utilisé beaucoup de moyens physiques et psychologiques ou moraux pour gagner en peu de temps. Mais il faut tout de même noter que CE fut un véritable pari, eu égard aux enjeux que révèlent la pratique de cette catégorie de sport d'une part et des difficultés rencontrées à mi-parcours d'autre part.

Enjeux et difficultés

La pratique du sport féminin en général et du sport de combat en particulier révèle d'enjeux divers et variés; lesquels dépendent souvent d'un groupe social à un autre et, parfois, d'une sportive à une autre. Dans les sociétés traditionnelles massa et toupouri par exemple, les filles constituent une source certaine de richesse. C'est pourquoi certains parents sont parfois hostiles quant à l'envoi de leurs filles à l'école et, par ricochet, à la pratique du sport fortement "genre", à savoir le judo et/ou la "lutte traditionnelle" qui, faut-il le rappeler, sont socialement et culturellement prohibés. C'est dire que, dans bien des cas, le sport féminin en général (le judo en l'occurrence) n'apporte rien

de prestigieux à la famille. Au contraire, c'est parfois même déshonorant pour certains parents d'avoir des filles qui, au lieu d'aller en mariage, s'engagent plutôt à poursuivre de longues études et/ou pratiquer du sport, quelle qu'en soit la nature.

Toutefois, cette conception du sport féminin semble être dépassée, C'est justement à ce niveau que se situent certaines frontières entre les zones rurales et les régions urbanisées, entre le village et la ville, entre la "tradition" et la "modernité", Mais quoiqu'on dise, il y a des parents (qu'ils soient au village ou non) qui acceptent que leurs filles pratiquent ce type de sport dit de combat, tant que cela n'a pas d'effets négatifs sur leur santé. « *Le Père de mon mari (mon beau-père), témoigne Félicité Minda Vella, était plutôt content d'entendre que je pratiquais de la lutte (judo), étant donné qu'il fut lui-même un excellent lutteur* »⁹⁵². Loin d'être une discipline déshonorante, le sport féminin doit plutôt être vulgarisé, étant donné qu'il permet aux femmes de mieux s'exprimer au même titre que les hommes. « *Pour certains féministes, le sport féminin est un lieu d'émancipation, de libération et de conquête égalitaire des femmes (...)* »⁹⁵³. Vu sous cet angle, la pratique du sport de combat (du judo) par les femmes présente un enjeu positif certain: la réduction des inégalités socio-culturelles entre les hommes et les femmes.

À la question de savoir pourquoi avoir choisi de pratiquer le judo, Félicité Minda Vella répond que c'est par orgueil personnel qu'elle a

⁹⁵²Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés [En ligne], 23/2006, mis en ligne Le 13 novembre 2006. URL: <http://clio.revues.org/index 1932.html>, p.6.

⁹⁵³Les montants des primes de participation et de médaille varient souvent d'une Université à une autre, d'une grande école à une autre, étant donné qu'elles sont autonomes sur les plans administratif et financier. Elles peuvent également varier d'une année académique à une autre et ceci en fonction, parfois, des humeurs des recteurs. Aux jeux universitaires de 2007 à Ngaoundéré par exemple, les sportifs de cette Université avaient refusé de décharger le montant de la prime (soit 15000 FCFA par étudiant) qui leur avait été proposé par leur staff. La principale raison qui sous-tendait ce refus était que leurs confrères de l'Université de Yaoundé I avaient plus du double du montant qui leur avait été alloué. Pour désamorcer leur mot d'ordre de grève, le Secrétaire Général de ladite Université, André Tientcheu Djako, était dans l'obligation d'ajouter 10000 FCFA à chacun des sportifs.

décidé d'être judoka, surtout d'être champion du Cameroun. De même, elle voulait défendre valablement les couleurs de son Université d'attache, étant donné qu'elle estimait avoir certaines prédispositions (des atouts physiques et naturels notamment) qui devaient lui permettre d'atteindre son objectif.

Par ailleurs, Félicité Minda Vella a essayé de briser certaines barrières culturellement imposées aux femmes massa et toupouri. Elle a permis à certains observateurs de confirmer l'idée selon laquelle les peuples massa et toupouri sont d'excellents lutteurs. C'est d'ailleurs l'une des raisons pour lesquelles sur les sept filles qui composaient l'équipe du judo de l'Université de N'Gaoundéré en 2004, cinq d'entre elles étaient massa et toupouri, soit plus de 70% de représentativité.

De façon générale, les étudiants sportifs des Universités d'Etat, des Universités privées et des Grandes Ecoles (Institut National de la Jeunesse et des Sports, Ecole des Travaux publics, Ecole des Postes et Télécommunications, etc.) du Cameroun reçoivent des primes d'encouragement de la part de leurs Universités d'attache. Il s'agit des primes de participation et de médaille⁹⁵⁴ qui constituent, entre autres, des raisons qui motivent souvent certain(e)s étudiant(e)s à pratiquer le sport en général. Félicité Minda Vella pense d'ailleurs que l'argent issu de différentes primes (surtout la prime de médaillés) a nouées par son Université et le Ministère d'origine lui ont été d'un grand apport. Autrement dit, la recherche du gain apparaît ici comme l'une des raisons qui l'a amenés pratiquer ce type de sport de combat, mieux, à devenir championne nationale afin de bénéficier de la prime de médaille d'or. Ce fut un pari gagné, mais difficilement à cause de certaines incommodités rencontrées tout au long de son parcours sportif, de 2000 à 2004.

En fait, Félicité Minda Vella a été contrôlée plusieurs difficultés durant sa "carrière" de judoka. Bien qu'étant un ancien lutteur, son père n'était pas d'accord pour qu'elle pratique le judo, eu égard aux éventuels risques qu'elle pouvait en courir (fracture en l'occurrence). Aussi craignait-il qu'elle pouvait consacrer plus de temps aux entraînements qu'à ses études.

⁹⁵⁴Félicité Minda Vella, entretien du 02/09/2009 à Douala.

Culturellement, le fait que les femmes massa et toupouri ne participent pas aux différents championnats de “lutte traditionnelle” organisés au sein de leurs villages a constitué un réel handicap pour elle, étant donné qu’elle ne s’est intéressée au judo que tardivement (en 2000). Elle estime d’ailleurs qu’elle aurait eu une réputation internationale si elle avait commencé à lutter dès son jeune âge. Au Nord-Cameroun en général et chez les Massa et les Toupouri en particulier, les femmes qui s’investissent dans des activités masculines sont considérées comme des “garçons rates” et, par conséquent, n’ont pas les mêmes considérations, mieux les mêmes chances d’avoir un mari. Tous ces clichés sociaux et culturels dédaignant auraient certainement joué en sa défaveur.

Félicité Minda Vella a rencontré d’autres difficultés liées à son intégration au sein du groupe des judokas de son Université d’attache. « *Il n’était pas du tout facile, dit-elle, de m’intégrer au sein du groupe. J’ai dû m’imposer par mon travail, étant donné que j’étais en complément d’effectif au départ (...)* »⁹⁵⁵. Généralement, les étudiants se méfient plus des sportifs de combat que de ceux évoluant dans les autres disciplines sportives, de peur qu’ils ne les battent physiquement en cas d’éventuelles altercations. Selon l’imagerie populaire, tous ceux qui pratiquent ce genre de sport sont forcément physiquement forts, d’où cette crainte d’être la probable victime. Or, comme le témoigne si bien Félicité Minda Vella, « *les judokas, les karatekas, les boxeurs, etc. ont habituellement la maîtrise d’eux-mêmes (...)* »⁹⁵⁶.

L’autre difficulté rencontrée par la plupart des judokas de l’université de N’Gaoundéré est le manque d’infrastructures d’accueil adéquates. C’est ce qui rend, de temps en temps, difficile leur encadrement technique. Enfin, le sport féminin ne bénéficie pas d’une véritable couverture médiatique au même titre que le sport masculin. Souvent, les médias présentent le sport féminin comme étant moins important. Il s’agit certes d’une situation vécue quotidiennement sur le plan mondial, mais qui aurait, semble-t-il, affecté personnellement Félicité Minda Vella. C’est d’ailleurs l’une des raisons pour lesquelles

⁹⁵⁵Idem

⁹⁵⁶NAB, Val A 1940/2.

on retrouve de moins en moins des supporteurs lors des différentes scènes de combat féminin.

Conclusion

Les femmes ont longtemps été exemptes de certaines activités sportives jugées fortement “gênées”, en l’occurrence la boxe, la “lutte”, le karaté, le judo, le rugby, etc. Chez la plupart des peuples du Cameroun en général et chez les Massa et Toupouri en particulier, la danse est considérée comme le principal, voire l’unique sport réservé aux femmes en raison, en partie, de leur sexe et/ou du rôle social qu’elles jouent au sein de leur famille. Dans ces sociétés fortement “patriarcales”, ou certaines opportunités reconnues aux jeunes filles sont quasiment bafouées ou réduites au bénéfice de leurs frères garçons, l’on est parfois tenté de dire que les femmes sont plus marginalisées qu’ailleurs. Ces inégalités socioculturelles sont plus en plus visibles au niveau de l’arrière-pays, étant donné que la ville apparaît, dans bien des cas, comme le lieu par excellence où les femmes peuvent s’exprimer le mieux. Ainsi elle marque inévitablement la fin de certaines frontières interdites aux femmes massa et toupouri: celle de la “lutte traditionnelle” ou du judo. L’exemple le plus patent est sans doute celui de Félicité Minda Vella qui a pu s’imposer dans une discipline sportive qui lui est strictement interdite dans son village.

Félicité Minda Vella a brisé le mythe massa et toupouri en remportant sa première médaille d’or en judo aux jeux universitaires de Yaoundé en 2004. Cela n’a pas été du tout facile, eu égard aux préjugés développés par rapport à la pratique du sport de combat en général et, par ricochet, au judo; eu égard au retard et au temps mis pour devenir championne nationale (2000-2004) et eu égard au manque et/ou à l’état veniste des infrastructures d’accueil.

Au regard de meilleures prestations sportives dont a fait preuve Félicité Minda Vella; au regard du fait que les femmes et les hommes doivent être égaux en matière de droits et de devoirs, des efforts devraient de plus en plus être consentis en faveur de la promotion du sport féminin, aussi bien en campagne qu’en ville. Aussi devrait-on sensibiliser non seulement les parents (Massa et Toupouri en

l'occurrence) à s'occuper véritablement de l'instruction de leurs filles, mais leur demander aussi et surtout de permettre à ces dernières de s'exprimer au même titre que les garçons sur le plan sportif. Pour cela, des actions conjuguées doivent être mises en place par les pouvoirs publics camerounais (les ministères en charge de la jeunesse notamment), la société civile, les Organisations Non Gouvernementales, les populations locales, etc. afin de remédier à cette situation.

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Les frontières parlementaires entre le Cameroun anglophone et le Cameroun francophone (1942-1972): Autopsie d'une réunification parlementaire tronquée.

Par

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Résumé

Ce que nous désignons sous l'appellation frontières parlementaires" est la différence nette qui a existé entre le parlement du Cameroun anglophone et celui du Cameroun francophone. Ces différences, résultats de deux cultures parlementaires et surtout de deux politiques coloniales diamétralement opposées, seront occultées au moment de la réunification. Ceci dans la mesure où au moment de la réunification, malgré les promesses faites par le président Ahidjo et les autres venus du Cameroun francophone, la culture parlementaire anglophone minoritaire va se retrouver noyée dans le régime présidentiel fédéral que le Cameroun adopte et qui se caractérise par une prééminence de l'exécutif sur le législatif. Ce qui compromettrait sérieusement la réunification parlementaire. Paradoxalement dans ce cas, la différence n'avait pas été une source d'enrichissement dans l'édification du Cameroun fédéral, mais plutôt, elle avait engendré des incompréhensions et des frustrations. Ces frontières parlementaires ont largement contribué à l'inefficacité de notre parlement. D'où la nécessité d'y remédier en mettant sur pied une structure législative qui refléterait mieux le Cameroun dans sa diversité.

Mots clés: Parlementarisme, pouvoir parlementaire, frontières parlementaires, régime politique, réunification, réunification parlementaire.

Abstract

By “parliamentary frontiers’: we are referring to the main difference that existed between the Cameroon Anglophone parliament on the one hand, and the Cameroon francophone parliament on the other. This difference, which emerged as a result of the merging of the two parliamentary cultures and most especially due to the two colonial systems which diametrically opposed one another, will openly manifest itself during the reunification. As a matter of fact, during the reunification, irrespective of the numerous promises made by Ahidjo and the other partisans of reunification from French Cameroon, the Anglophone parliamentary culture which was of the minority will be absorbed into the Cameroon federal Presidential system. This was mostly characterised by the dominance of the executive over the legislative, and the resulting effect being that it seriously compromised the idea of reunifying the two parliaments. Paradoxically in this case, the difference did not become a source of enrichment so to better run the state of Federal Cameroon, but it instead led to some incomprehension and frustrations. These parliamentary frontiers largely contributed to the ineffective functioning of our parliament. Thus, came the necessity of some sought of a synergy and the putting in place of a legislative structure which will better portray the diversity of Cameroon.

Keys Words: parliamentary, parliamentary power, parliamentary frontiers, political regime, reunification, parliamentary reunification.

Introduction

Le Cameroun se caractérise par son “biculturalisme”. Ce “biculturalisme” plonge ses racines dans son passé colonial. En effet, depuis la fin de la première guerre mondiale, le Cameroun est administré par deux puissances coloniales: la Grande Bretagne qui occupe le 4/5e du territoire à l’Ouest appelé Cameroun britannique et la France qui dispose les 4/5e du territoire à l’Est appelé Cameroun français. Ces deux territoires vont connaître des évolutions différentes

jusqu'en 1961, année au cours de laquelle ils vont être réunifiés. Cette réunification, au-delà de ses aspects théorique voire folkloriques, devait être effective dans tous les domaines de la vie d'un Etat. Le parlement qui en fait partie et constitue même l'institution la plus complète puisque son champ d'action s'étend sur tous les domaines, se retrouve au centre de toutes les attentions. Ceci d'une part parce que ces deux institutions parlementaires de part et d'autre du fleuve Mungo étaient fondamentalement différentes dans leur structure et leur fonctionnement, d'où l'expression "frontières parlementaires" que nous utilisons pour qualifier ces différences; d'autre part parce que ces institutions constituaient chacune dans sa région, l'unique cadre, le seul creuset et surtout le levier de la vie politique. Il apparaissait impératif, afin de réussir la réunification, d'assurer une parfaite union de ces deux cultures parlementaires. Cette réussite ne pouvait être possible que si les frontières parlementaires existant entre les deux territoires avaient été prises en compte dans le processus de réunification et non évacuées. Notre travail consiste à analyser la mise en place de ces frontières, le sort qui leur a été réservé au moment de la réunification et évaluer la survivance ou non de ces frontières.

I - Les frontières parlementaires entre le Cameroun anglophone et le Cameroun francophone: un héritage colonial

Nous désignons dans l'appellation "frontières parlementaires" les différences très importantes qui existaient entre le parlement au Cameroun anglophone et celui du Cameroun francophone. Ces différences prennent leur racine dans le passé colonial des deux territoires. En effet, la Grande Bretagne et la France avaient chacune, dans son territoire, imposé un système parlementaire qui s'apparentait au sien.

Le parlementarisme au Cameroun anglophone a connu dans son évolution deux principales étapes: la première, qui commença en 1942 et s'acheva en 1953, permettait aux Camerounais d'aller défendre les intérêts de leur territoire dans les structures représentatives nigérianes et la seconde fut la création sur le territoire du Cameroun méridional britannique d'un parlement des 1954.

En effet des 1942, sous l'influence de la *Cameroon Welfare Union*, qui était un groupe de pression créé en 1939 par J. N. Mbene, un Camerounais fut désigné par l'administration coloniale britannique pour représenter le Cameroun au Conseil Législatif de Lagos. Le choix de l'administration se porta sur le *Chief* Manga Williams. En 1945, la constitution Richard augmenta le nombre de représentants (qui passe d'un adieu) qui devaient représenter le Cameroun à l'assemblée régionale d'Enugu⁹⁵⁷. Ainsi, en plus de Manga Williams, l'administration coloniale sélectionna Fon Galega II. En 1951, la constitution Richard fut remplacée par la constitution Mac Pherson. L'innovation notable de cette constitution en ce qui concerne le Cameroun méridionale britannique est l'augmentation des représentants qui devaient siéger à l'assemblée régionale d'Enugu. Les Camerounais furent désormais 13 élus sur un total de 80 élus. Aux termes des élections, les Camerounais suivants furent élus.

Ce nombre de 13 élus, bien que augmenté, restait très peu et noyait les Camerounais dans la masse parlementaire nigérienne. Cette marginalisation, les Camerounais la vivaient dans l'exercice de leur fonction parlementaire. Au cours de la crise constitutionnelle d'Enugu qui opposait entre eux les Nigériens de la National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), majoritaires à l'assemblée, les Camerounais choisissent d'adopter une "neutralité bienveillante", refusant de s'ingérer dans une crise nigéro-nigérienne. Ils durent subir les réprimandes de la part des députés de la NCNC. Face à cette attitude, les Camerounais durent rentrer chez eux. Une fois chez eux, les élus camerounais, soutenus par leurs chefs traditionnels, initièrent une série de démarches qui les conduisit à la conférence de Lancaster House à Londres et qui déboucha plus tard sur la création d'une assemblée au Cameroun.

En 1954, la constitution Littleton érigea le Cameroun en région au sein de la fédération nigérienne et surtout, fait important, une assemblée régionale fut créée au Cameroun. L'assemblée, entre 1954 et 1961, connut une évolution continue. Cette évolution à ses débuts fut modérée mais après le renouvellement, on assista à d'importantes mutations au sein de l'assemblée notamment dans ses activités.

⁹⁵⁷Ndi, *The Golden Age*, p.132.

Tableau 1 : Les Camerounais à L'Assemblée de la région orientale 1951

Provinces	Régions	Nombre de sièges	Noms	
Bamenda	Dahomey	3	V.T. Lainjo	
			S.T.Muna	
			J.N. Foncha	
	Nkambe	2	J.T. Ndze	
			A.T. Ngala	
	Wum	2	Rev.J.C. Kangsen	
			S.C. Ndi	
	Cameroons	Mamfe	2	S.A. George
				M.N. Foju
		Kumba	2	N.N. Mbile
Chief R.N. Charley				
Dr E.M.L. Endeley				
Victoria	2	P .N.Motomby-		
		Woleta		

Source: Bong Amaaze, *The Eastern Nigérian Crisis* p. 26

La création de l'assemblée en 1954, en pleine législature des élus camerounais à l'assemblée de la région orientale du Nigeria, avait donné lieu à des réajustements, ceci bien que ces élus aient boycotté les travaux. Cette première assemblée avait, à quelques exceptions près, reconduit les élus de 1952.⁹⁵⁸ Ils étaient ajoutés aux membres officiels spéciaux et aux autorités traditionnelles. Ainsi, l'assemblée était constituée de F. A. Sons, W. E. W. Carter, M.T. Monju, H.N. Mulango, Nformi, J. N. Nkwain, I. Nsame, D. E Idowu, J.M. Williams, A.N. Jua, J.N. Foncha, S.E Ncha, EK. Martin, V.T. Lainjo, S.A. Foto, I.M Bokwe, I. T. Ndze, S.A. George, S.T. Muna, J. Murray, J.C. Kangsen, R. Burton Cardale, G. K, J. Amachee, E M. L. Endeley, et enfin du Commissaire du Cameroun E J. Gibbons.⁹⁵⁹

Ces 25 personnes étaient constituées entre autres, des élus, des autorités traditionnelles, des membres officiels et spéciaux. Parmi les Africains de cette assemblée, on trouvait des personnes venant des couches sociales différentes et exerçant des activités différentes. On notait une majorité d'enseignants, puis des autorités traditionnelles et certains princes. Beaucoup d'entre eux venaient des classes sociales moyennes et le fruit de l'éducation missionnaire. Certains comme V.T. Lainjo, J.N. Foncha et S.T. Muna avaient débuté leur carrière professionnelle dans les structures éducatives missionnaires.

Concernant l'expérience et la composition politique, il est à noter qu'ils étaient pour la plupart les anciens élus de 1952 à l'assemblée d'Enugu. Ils avaient une idée précise de l'exercice des responsabilités parlementaires⁹⁶⁰.

En 1957 une assemblée constituée des représentants de trois partis politiques fut élue, à savoir:

- Kamerun National Congress (KNC) qui disposait de 46,15% des sièges;
- Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) avec 38,46%

⁹⁵⁸Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹Guillaume Ernest Edjang Njenji "L'Institution représentative au Cameroun sous administration française" mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaoundé Octobre 1985, p 25.

⁹⁶⁰Ibid

des sièges;

- Kamerun People Party (KPP) avec 15, 38% des sièges

En 1959, les mêmes partis furent réélus avec cette fois une prédominance du KNDP avec 56% des sièges; le KNC disposa de 36% des sièges et le KPP de 8% seulement. C'est ce nouveau parlement qui allait préparer la réunification avec le Cameroun francophone.

Avant la création de l'Assemblée Représentative du Cameroun (ARCAM), a existé une assemblée que nous appelons "la petite assemblée". Ces deux assemblées frontières ont été le premier cadre où les Camerounais ont été initiés à la chose parlementaire.

"La petite assemblée locale" avait été créée avant la Constitution française de 1946, et avant la réglementation précisant le cadre de fonctionnement des assemblées locales. L'administration coloniale locale avait, à la suite des recommandations, créé dans la précipitation une assemblée à la marge d'action très restreinte et contrôlée. Le second collège appelé seconde section réservée aux locaux non citoyens comptait, comme la 1^{ère} section, 17 délégués dont 6 élus au suffrage direct, 8 désignés par cooptation des chefs indigènes, 2 venant des groupements coopératifs et un représentant des syndicats⁹⁶¹. Cette précipitation s'explique par la volonté des colons locaux à vouloir contrôler une situation qui semblait leur échapper.

Au regard de cette représentativité, on est porté à convenir qu'elle tenait compte de tous les aspects de la vie sociale. Cependant, une analyse approfondie nous montre qu'il n'en était rien.

⁹⁶¹Rapport Annuel du gouvernement français à l'assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration du Cameroun sous tutelle de la France, année 1972.

Tableau 2: les représentants de la « petite Assemblée »

Circonscriptions électorales	Première Section	Seconde section
Douala	<i>Guyard</i>	Ngando Black
Yaounde	Baudet	Ebede Albert
Bafia-Foumban-Dschang-Nkongsamba	Grassard	Djoumessi Mathias
Ngaoundéré-Garoua-Maroua	Tricou	Iyawa Adamou
Batouri-Abong Mbang	Soubalte	<i>Effoundou Zong</i>
<i>Edea-Ebolowa-Kribi</i>	Chamaulte	<i>Oyono Ndoum</i>

Source : G. E. Edjang Njenji, ‘L’institution représentative au Cameroun sous administration française’, mémoire de maîtrise en histoire, Université de Yaounde, 1985, p 25.

En effet, dans leur souci de contrôler et de maintenir entière leur emprise au Cameroun, l’administration locale avait donné aux deux sections un même nombre de délégués. Ainsi, la masse des populations locales n’avait que sept délégués comme la poignée de colons qui vivait au Cameroun. L’administration qui avait une influence importante dans la plupart des chefferies décida de laisser aux autorités traditionnelles le loisir de désigner huit délégués, dont deux devaient être issus des coopératives qu’elle contrôlait. Les six autres délégués susceptibles d’avoir des avis différents de ceux de l’administration étaient minoritaires. De cette manière, l’administration contrôlait la petite assemblée tout en donnant l’impression de libéraliser. Cette assemblée fut élue le 10 mars et le 7 avril 1946 pour une durée de 4 ans.

Cependant, la constitution du 27 octobre 1946 qui prévoyait un nouveau cadre juridique des assemblées, mit fin à son existence⁹⁶².

La petite assemblée, avec ses 9 mois de vie, n'a suffisamment pas eu de temps pour écrire les pages de son histoire. Elle fut dissoute pour céder la place à l'Assemblée Représentative du Cameroun (ARCAM).

L'ARCAM fut élue en deux tours: un premier tour en décembre 1946 et un second en janvier 1947. A la suite de ces élections, l'assemblée comptait 40 délégués dont 16 au premier collège et 24 au second. Tous les délégués étaient élus et étaient assez représentatifs de toutes les régions et des grands groupes socio-tribaux.

Tableau 3 : Les représentants de la première ARCAM XE « ARCAM »

Section I	Section II
Albert XE "Albert"	Abdul Baghi
Aubery Roger	Abega Martin
Chamaulte Henri	Ahidjo Ahmadou
Caron	Ahmadou Zamey
Dehon	Bessala Valere
Fayet	Chedjou Joseph
Fouletler	Donala Bell
Giard	Ebede Albert
Grassard	Effoudou Zong
Guyard	Iyawa Adamou

⁹⁶²Efou a Mbozo'o, L'assemblée Nationale du Cameroun, pp 8-9.

Koudjaali	Kamga
Lagarde Marcel	Kemajou Danel
Pelletier	Mahonde Ahmadou
Penanhoat Brleuc	Medou Gaston
Schmidt	Melone
Tricou	Mohamadou Ousmanou
	Nomo Martin
	Okala Charles
	Pitol
	Seidou Njimoluh
	Soppo Priso
	TellaZimil
	Woungly Massaga
	Yerima Halilou.

Source: R.Khaloun, (sd), *Livre d'or de l'Assemblée Nationale de la République du Cameroun: 1947-1978*, Yaounde, 1980, p. 20.

Cette assembles alla jusqu'au bout de son mandat⁹⁶³. Grace à elle, les Camerounais se familiarisèrent avec la chose parlementaire, explorant certains de ses aspects. L'ARCAM fut Le creuset dans lequel la jeune élite Camerounaise commença à faire ses armes en politique. Les autres assemblées vont parfaire ce travail initié par elle.

A la suite de l'ARCAM, le Cameroun sous administration française connut deux autres assemblées: l'Assemblée Territoriale du Cameroun

⁹⁶³Les journaux de débat aux différentes assemblées.

(ATCAM) et l'Assemblée Législative du Cameroun (ALCAM). Ces deux assemblées poursuivaient l'œuvre d'éducation politique des Camerounais, comme pouvait en témoigner la qualité des débats en assembles.⁹⁶⁴ Cette assurance, ils la puisaient d'une part dans l'électorat de plus en plus important qu'ils représentaient, et d'autre part dans l'élargissement des compétences et du nombre des parlementaires.

Créée à la fin du mandat de l'ARCAM par la loi N° 52-130 du 6 février 1952⁹⁶⁵, l'ATCAM fonctionna au Cameroun dans un contexte pluraliste. L'élargissement de l'électorat camerounais et les autres innovations qu'elle apporte distinguèrent cette assembles des premières.

En 1952, la scène politique camerounaise connut quelques changements. Les populations s'émancipaient politiquement, ceci tant et si bien que l'élargissement de l'électorat qui était supposé se calquer à cette nouvelle donne se révélait insuffisant.⁹⁶⁶

A la veille des élections à l'ATCAM, on assista entre 1947 et 1952 à un foisonnement de partis politiques, toutes tendances confondues. Ces partis avalent des objectifs bien établis. Dans le but de satisfaire cette jeune élite dynamique, la France initia un élargissement contrôlé de l'électorat. Cependant, cet élargissement frustra ces nationalistes qui l'estimaient insuffisant pour permettre aux populations de participer massivement aux choix de leurs représentants à l'ATCAM. Mais, ils devaient non seulement s'en contenter, mais aussi faire face aux tripatouillages électoraux de l'administration coloniale⁹⁶⁷ désireuse d'écarter les radicaux de l'institution parlementaire. Un fait remarquable dans ce nouvel électorat fut l'entrée en scène de la femme. Certaines femmes votèrent pour la première fois. Ce droit de vote permit d'exprimer leur choix, prenant ainsi activement part à l'élection de leur candidat.

Ainsi, les populations s'étaient préparées pour cette deuxième

⁹⁶⁴ANY 2A'C l'ARCAM. Election 1953 révision des listes électorales d'Edea,

⁹⁶⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶⁶Achille Mbembe, Ruben Um Nyobe, le problème national Kamerunais, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1984, pp. 133-135.

⁹⁶⁷Efou a Mbozo'o, L'Assemblée Nationale, p.9.

élection, corrigeant les erreurs du passé. Mais le code électoral encore restrictif ne permit pas à tous les Camerounais en âge de voter de s'adonner à cet exercice. Toujours est-il qu'au terme de ces élections, l'ATCAM prit corps.

L'ATCAM apporta des innovations dans l'exercice parlementaire. La loi N° 52-130 du 6 février 1952, augmenta l'effectif des représentants à l'assemblée. Désormais, il était de 50 membres dont 18 au 1^{er} collège et 32 au second. A l'instar de l'ARCAM, l'ATCAM était une assemblée essentiellement délibérante. Elle ne délibérait que sur des questions qui relevaient du social et de l'économie.⁹⁶⁸ La différence avec l'ARCAM est que l'ATCAM a été la première assemblée élire son bureau. Elle a créé également des commissions (six au total) chargées d'étudier et d'examiner certaines questions spécifiques. Ainsi, l'assemblée camerounaise connut son premier Président. A cause de la loi cadre qui apporta de nombreuses innovations, cette assemblée ne put aller au bout de son mandat, car il fallait une assemblée qui répondait aux exigences de la loi cadre.

A travers l'ATCAM, les Camerounais expérimentèrent réellement le parlementarisme à travers ses diverses structures. Mais son mandat fut court et prit fin le 15 novembre 1956⁹⁶⁹ au lieu du 30 mars 1957. Une nouvelle élection à l'assemblée fut organisée. A la suite de cette élection, émerge à l'ATCAM qui en 1957 devient l'Assemblée législative du Cameroun (ALCAM).

Créée à la suite de la Loi Cadre, l'ALCAM était une assemblée différente des précédentes car à partir de mai 1957 elle légiférait. C'est elle qui prépare le territoire à l'indépendance.

La Loi Cadre Gaston Defferre fut votée par le parlement métropolitain le 23 juin 1956. Sa mise en application se fit seulement à partir de mars 1957. Elle eut des répercussions sur les assemblées locales. En effet, la Loi Cadre changea le visage de l'assemblée locale. Désormais, l'élection à l'assemblée territoriale se faisait au suffrage universel et, au sein de l'assemblée, il n'y avait plus qu'un collège. Avec ces innovations, l'électorat s'élargit considérablement. On assista, avec

⁹⁶⁸Levine, *Le Cameroun du Mandat*, p. 203.

⁹⁶⁹ANY, APA 11474 bioicadre 1946-1956 Constitution et loi Cadre au Cameroun.

la fusion des 2 collèges, a une africanisation de l'assemblée ainsi qu'à l'ébauche d'une nationalisation de l'assemblée.⁹⁷⁰

Ainsi, avec la Loi Cadre, l'assemblée avait un nouveau visage rompant avec celui des assemblées de 47 et de 52. Cette nouvelle institution avait une organisation et un fonctionnement particuliers. Après la dissolution de l'ATCAM, on procéda à son renouvellement. C'est en mai 1957,⁹⁷¹ après promulgation de la loi portant statut du Cameroun, que l'ATCAM devient l'ALCAM.

Le 10 mai 1957, son bureau fut élu, L'ALCAM eut quatre années de législature. Elle fut la génitrice de l'Etat du Cameroun, le dotant d'un hymne, d'un drapeau, d'un gouvernement et contribuant à l'élaboration de sa constitution. Cette assemblée, sous les directives de la France, mena le Cameroun à son indépendance en 1960. Avec l'ALCAM, le parlementarisme au Cameroun atteignit sa forme complète car elle obtint le droit de légiférer et d'aborder certaines questions politiques.⁹⁷² Ainsi, l'ALCAM, plus que l'ATCAM, a été le moteur de l'indépendance du Cameroun, donnant à ce territoire de nouveaux attributs d'un Etat, qui naît, grâce à elle le 1^{er} janvier 1960.

La première assemblée nationale du Cameroun se constitua au lendemain des indépendances. Cette assemblée, qui avait, par le truchement de la constitution, reçu des attributions particulières, avait été élue dans l'ambiance surchauffée des tensions nationalistes.

Elue le 10 Avril 1960, la première assemblée nationale du jeune Etat du Cameroun siégea pour la première fois 18 jours plus tard. Cette assemblée, de par son organisation et ses réalisations, différait de toutes celles qui l'avaient précédées. L'opportunité de l'étude de cette institution malgré son éphéméride, se justifie par sa singularité et ses réalisations.

Avant leur indépendance, les territoires du Cameroun Oriental et Occidental avaient connu des évolutions et des systèmes parlementaires bien distincts. Cette différence découlait des systèmes

⁹⁷⁰Guiffro Mopo, *Constitutions du Cameroun*, pp. 11-23.

⁹⁷¹Guiffro Mopo, *Constitutions du Cameroun*, pp. 11-23.

⁹⁷²Ngoh, *Constitutional developments*. pp. 22-124.

parlementaires et coloniaux des Français et des Britanniques. Si le pouvoir et la fonction parlementaire ont connu dans ces assemblées une évolution ascendante, les pratiques parlementaires y étaient dissemblables. Ce qui a poussé certains à préférer la pratique parlementaire dans un système plutôt que dans un autre. La difficile comparaison de l'évolution de ces deux systèmes parlementaires très différents dans ces deux territoires coloniaux nous amène à dire que le Cameroun Oriental avait une tradition parlementaire qui datait de 1945. En effet, entre 1945 et 1956, les assemblées pionnières avaient évolué dans une réglementation assez restreinte. Les élus étaient appelés à examiner des lois dans les domaines économique, social et culturel. Les questions politiques n'étaient pas autorisées. Les assemblées jouaient, selon les textes réglementaires, un rôle essentiellement délibératif. N'ayant connu aucune autre expérience parlementaire, les élus abordèrent cette phase initiatique avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme. C'est la raison pour laquelle ils s'étaient plus ou moins bien moules dans le cadre juridique restreignant ou les confinait la réglementation parlementaire. Cette évolution n'était pas la même au Cameroun britannique.

C'est- en effet en 1942 que le premier Camerounais, Manga William, fut choisi par l'administration coloniale britannique pour représenter ce territoire à l'assemblée de Lagos. De ce moment à 1961, le pouvoir parlementaire connut une évolution ascendante. En effet, on passa des représentations aux assemblées régionales (région Orientale) et fédérale du Nigeria à la création, dans le territoire, à une assemblée qui sera plus tard bicamérale⁹⁷³.

En effet, les Camerounais qui dans les assemblées nigérianes étaient minoritaires, donc incapables de faire pencher la balance en leur faveur, allaient des 1954, au sein de leur assemblée, exercer leurs fonctions parlementaires avec toutes les libertés que cet exercice parlementaire procurait. Ainsi, comme dans le système politique britannique, les assemblées formaient le gouvernement, examinaient et contrôlaient son fonctionnement et ses orientations. Ce contrôle se faisait à l'aide des questions, des interpellations, des enquêtes et audits.

⁹⁷³Entretien avec G. Ako Esambe mené en aout 2004 à Buea,

Au terme d'une enquête, les résultats comme dans les pures traditions parlementaires, étaient confiés à l'assemblée qui interrogeait le ministre concerne, De plus, cette assemblée plus tard, devint bicamérale : la chambre haute occupée par les chefs traditionnels qui avaient un rôle consultatif et la chambre basse constituée des élus qui proposaient, examinaient, adoptaient ou rejetaient les lois. D'une façon générale, les opinions des personnes qui avaient connu et vécu l'assemblée de 1954 soutiennent que cette dernière connaissait une véritable démocratie parlementaire. Ako Esambe G. soutient que l'assemblée de 1954 était plus dynamique et plus prolifique.⁹⁷⁴

Les similitudes qu'on peut déceler dans ces deux formes d'assemblées sont le rôle prédominant qu'y jouait l'administration coloniale. Ce sont les gouverneurs ou leurs représentants qui ouvraient la session, présentant le territoire dans tous ses aspects et donnant les grandes orientations de leur politique. Ainsi, les gouverneurs jouaient un rôle important dans les assemblées coloniales. Ce rôle conditionnait les relations entre l'exécutif et le législatif. En effet, au Cameroun, les pouvoirs exécutif et législatif avaient entretenu entre 1942 et 1961 des relations de domination et d'équilibre qui dépendaient du contexte politique du moment. Ces relations étaient formalisées par des textes de loi. Entre 1942 et 1962, les relations exécutif-législatif avaient été influencées par la colonisation aussi bien au Cameroun Oriental qu'au Cameroun Occidental. Pendant cette période, l'exécutif était représenté par l'administration coloniale. On notait une prééminence absolue de celle-ci. Dans les deux territoires, les sessions parlementaires étaient ouvertes par le gouvernement ou le Haut-Commissaire, ou encore celui qui représentait cette autorité-là. Au Cameroun français, Louis Paul Aujoulat, alors Président de l'Assemblée Nationale, décrivait à l'ouverture de la première session de 1953 cette relation en ces termes :

... les conseillers territoriaux n'ont pas toujours l'impression de trouver auprès de, l'administration locale et notamment à l'échelon des régions, la collaboration franche, loyale, confiante, qu'ils sont

⁹⁷⁴Journal des débats parlementaires A l'ATCAM, du 20 avril 1953, discours de M.L.P. Aujoulat.

en droit d'attendre de la part d'administrateurs à qui ils peuvent apporter -est-il utile de le souligner- un concours particulièrement précieux, a un moment décisif de l'évolution de ce pays⁹⁷⁵.

En d'autres termes, les administrateurs avaient une attitude condescendante vis-à-vis des représentants du peuple. De plus, les questions à l'ordre du jour étaient pour la plupart, définies par l'autorité. Aucune critique de l'administration n'était autorisée. Il y avait certaines restrictions au Cameroun Occidental avant 1954. Les élus siégeaient dans les assemblées nigérianes et leur représentation minoritaire ne leur permettait pas d'influencer de façon significative les débats ou alors d'imposer leurs opinions. Des 1954, cet état de choses changea. Cependant, le gouvernement envoyait des représentants à l'assemblée et parmi eux, l'*Attorney General* y nommait des représentants d'intérêts particuliers, mais ceux-ci influençaient très peu la marche des choses car ils n'étaient pas nombreux.

En mai 1957, la domination coloniale diminua au Cameroun Oriental avec le statut interne, mais en 1959 il y eut une nouvelle forme de domination avec les pleins pouvoirs accordés par l'Assemblée au Premier Ministre. Une nouvelle forme de prééminence de l'exécutif prit corps au Cameroun. C'est avec le fédéralisme qu'elle fut mieux observée,

II-Les bases parlementaires de la réunification

L'idée de la réunification a été initialement soulevée par l'UPC et s'est progressivement insérée dans l'esprit des élus et des populations camerounaises et les résultats du plébiscite le confirmaient au Cameroun méridional britannique. Pour réaliser cette réunification, il fallait mettre sur pied des institutions et le cadre réglementaire dans lequel devrait exister cette réunification. Les assemblées furent de ce fait sollicitées.

La réunification, une fois évoquée, au sein de l'assemblée, ne laissait personne insensible dans la mesure où il fallait réfléchir sur la

⁹⁷⁵Bayart, L'Etat au Cameroun, pp. 53-58.

question, se positionner par rapport à la question et enfin, préparer le cadre et les populations à ce grand changement. Nous allons analyser les opinions des parlementaires sur la question ainsi que le contexte de l'élaboration de la structure fédérale.

L'idée de la réunification avait initialement été évoquée en dehors du cadre de l'assemblée et après les indépendances. Une fois évoquée, elle suscita des positions controversées. Au Cameroun francophone, la réunification n'était pas soutenue par tous. En effet, il y avait certains élus qui étaient contre. Ces élus anti-réunificationnistes se recrutaient au sein du Bloc Démocratique Camerounais devenu le groupe de l'opposition au sein de l'assemblée. Cette position pouvait être interprétée de deux façons. D'une part les élus du BDC estimaient que le jeune Etat n'était pas prêt. Pour eux, le moment était mal choisi pour évoquer la question, car il fallait concentrer ses forces dans la lutte contre l'insécurité que vivaient les populations camerounaises et la pacification du territoire. Certains voyaient la une manœuvre pour distraire les Camerounais de la question d'assainissement du climat politique au Cameroun.⁹⁷⁶

Par ailleurs, les élus du BOC, en particulier son chef de file, étaient accusés de s'opposer pour s'opposer. En effet, depuis son renversement, Mbida prenait à contre-pied toutes les propositions émises par son successeur et les élus du groupe parlementaire dénommé Union Camerounaise. Ceci quelle que soit la pertinence de la question évoquée.

Selon Achingui Philippe, il y avait également au sein de l'assemblée, une tranche d'élus qui était neutre voire désintéressée par la question. Beaucoup dans cette catégorie attendaient que les avis des uns et des autres soient fixés pour se positionner à leur tour⁹⁷⁷. Ainsi, les anti-réunificationnistes existaient et avaient également des arguments défendables. Toutefois, ils n'étaient pas majoritaires à l'assemblée. La cause réunificationniste était à la mode au sein du groupe majoritaire à l'assemblée, les partisans de la réunification affichaient des nuances au niveau de leurs approches.

⁹⁷⁶Entretien avec l'Honorable Achingui Philippe du 17 au 21 juin 1999 à Bafoussam.

⁹⁷⁷LeVine, Le Cameroun, pp.233-239.

Après l'engouement soudain du Président Ahidjo sur la question de la réunification, les élus de l'UC majoritaires versèrent dans cette position, joignant ainsi L'UPC et assimilés et d'autres groupes aux idées proches de celles de ce parti nationaliste. Cette prise de position témoignait d'une part de la volonté de l'UC de récupérer les Camerounais acquis à la cause upeciste, et d'autre part du fait que les idées de l'UPC n'étaient pas aussi mauvaises que l'administration coloniale et ses assimilés camerounais avaient initialement voulu le faire croire. La nuance ici parmi ces pro-réunificationnistes est que l'UPC proposait une réunification avant l'indépendance; l'UC dont c'était une cause récente voulait la réunification après l'indépendance; les élus comme Soppo Priso et D. Kemajou voulaient quant à eux une table ronde préalable à toute avancée politique.⁹⁷⁸

Il convient d'évoquer les positions des élus de l'ouest. Achinguï soutient que certains étaient très prudents, d'autres préféraient adopter le suivisme comme les élus de l'UC; d'autres encore tel Kuimy, trop prudents, pratiquaient une politique du silence.⁹⁷⁹

Des raisons diverses justifiaient cette politique réunificationniste. Certains élus en perte de vitesse tel Daniel Kemajou souhaitaient redorer leurs blasons, d'autres comptaient enfin voir une partie de leur programme politique se réaliser. C'est le cas de l'UPC. D'autres encore, particulièrement ceux de l'UC, à travers cette cause révélaient un costume de nationaliste zélé, Bref étant majoritaires, ils triomphèrent sur les anti-réunificationnistes et progressivement la machine en faveur de la réunification se mit en marche. La réunification fut envisagée au Cameroun francophone alors que Le territoire vivait une rébellion ouverte dans certaines de ses régions. Le jeune Etat du Cameroun n'était pas parvenu à arrêter cette rébellion et déjà il envisageait la réunification avec le Cameroun anglophone. Pour ce faire, la démarche suivante fut accomplie.

Au lendemain des indépendances, le jeune Etat du Cameroun devait faire face à une opposition tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur. A

⁹⁷⁸Il intervenait très peu à l'assemblée pendant son mandat. Il est quasiment absent des débats parlementaires.

⁹⁷⁹Le Vine, Le Cameroun, pp. 205-241.

l'intérieur, une branche de l'UPC continuait à entretenir la rébellion, ceci malgré la levée de l'interdiction qui frappait cette formation. Des foyers de regroupement furent créés en pays bassa, bamiléké et dans le Mungo, dans le but de protéger les populations et surtout de contrôler les mouvements des maquisards.⁹⁸⁰ Le jeune Etat essaya de résoudre le problème en accordant des remises de peine à certains prisonniers, arrêtant d'autres, réhabilitant encore certains. En un mot, il maniait la carotte et le bâton. Cette situation d'insécurité non seulement inquiétait cette jeune administration et instaurait un climat de suspicion⁹⁸¹, mais aussi sapait l'image de ce jeune gouvernement à l'extérieur. Ce même dénigrement était exacerbé par les critiques et les accusations portées par les Upecistes exilés auprès de nombreux pays amis. Ils portaient ces revendications à la tribune de l'ONU. Cette situation fragilisait le jeune Etat.⁹⁸² La réunification était comme une bouffée d'air fraîche qui permettait au pouvoir, non seulement de penser à autre chose, mais aussi de donner l'impression que la rébellion n'était pas aussi importante que le prétendaient ses détracteurs. C'est ainsi que le processus d'élaboration de la structure fédérale fut enclenché.

La mise sur pied de la structure fédérale nécessitait une réforme de toute la politique administrative et institutionnelle. Cette réforme passait par l'assemblée.

Le 1er septembre 1961, l'Assemblée Nationale vota la loi portant révision constitutionnelle. Cette loi mettait fin aux structures du jeune Etat. L'Assemblée nationale ne fut pas épargnée. Elle fut dissoute. Elle préparait ainsi la mise en place de la structure fédérale.

Au Cameroun britannique, les défenseurs de la réunification étaient plus recrutés au sein des élites du KNDP que d'aucuns ont qualifié d'opportunistes certains leaders traditionnels tels Mvom Ebandja III qui a été un chantre de la réunification. Les arguments évoqués par les uns et les autres étaient entre autres le passé colonial allemand qui avait tissé des liens entre les populations, l'envie de rassembler les villages et les peuples divisés du fait du partage du Cameroun entre français et

⁹⁸⁰Ibid.

⁹⁸¹Ibid.

⁹⁸²Guiffo Mopo, Constitutions du Cameroun, p. 96.

Anglais, le souci de mettre fin à certaines frustrations nées des marginalisations 'que la colonisation britannique avait parfois générées chez certaines populations' camerounaises. Ainsi donc, en 1959, le Cameroun britannique fut appelé à décider de son destin par le truchement d'un plébiscite. Il était question de rester dans la fédération nigériane ou de rejoindre le Cameroun Oriental. Au terme de ce plébiscite, le ralliement au Cameroun l'emporta majoritairement. Le résultat de ce plébiscite secréta d'importantes transformations politiques, notamment la réunification.

La structure fédérale mise en place divisa en trois le pouvoir législatif à travers la création, pour les deux territoires fédérés, de deux assemblées fédérées, et l'assemblée fédérale. Concernant les assemblées fédérées, la décentralisation de l'assemblée avait permis de déconcentrer le pouvoir législatif et de rapprocher les élus de leur électeur. Elle donnait ainsi l'opportunité à ces institutions de se pencher sur les questions posées par leur électeur en diminuant la saturation qu'aurait indubitablement occasionnée l'existence d'une seule Assemblée.

Par ailleurs, les assemblées fédérées étaient les seules institutions qui gardaient l'authenticité de la culture politique que chaque Etat fédéré avait reçue pendant la période coloniale. Cependant, le pouvoir des assemblées fédérées était subordonné à celui de l'assemblée fédérale. Les assemblées fédérées vont fonctionner pendant toute la période de la République fédérale. Il convient tout de même de noter qu'en 1965, l'ALCAMOC a connu une importante restructuration avec la dissolution de la chambre des chefs; ces deux institutions ont exercé leur fonction dans le "mouchoir" juridique à eux attribué par la Constitution fédérale.

De façon générale, avant 1972, le pouvoir parlementaire avait connu des fortunes diverses. Alors que pendant la période coloniale, il connaissait une évolution ascendante, avec les indépendances et la réunification, ce pouvoir s'était complexifié pour déboucher sur un pouvoir législatif quasiment "subordonné à l'exécutif. La diminution de ce pouvoir qui était prêt de l'assujettissement s'était opérée à un moment où on espérait plus de libertés grâce à l'indépendance et à la réunification, ce qui posait le problème du succès ou non de la

réunification parlementaire.

III - L'échec de la réunification parlementaire

La réunification a contribué au musellement du pouvoir législatif. En effet, la création de plusieurs assemblées fragilisait ce pouvoir et rendait les assemblées moins efficaces. Ainsi, la domination de l'exécutif dans la structure fédérale n'était plus à démontrer, mais devait davantage se préciser, poussant certains observateurs, à partir de "dérive centraliste". Le contexte politique a joué sa partition dans ce processus de musellement du pouvoir législatif.

La période allant de 1966 à 1972 marqua un tournant décisif dans le fédéralisme au Cameroun. En effet, la Constitution fédérale donnait déjà largement le ton en précisant que l'initiative des lois appartenait tant à l'exécutif qu'au législatif. L'article 24 allait plus loin. Il précisait que le législatif pouvait autoriser le chef de l'Etat, sur des questions précises et pendant une durée déterminée, à prendre des ordonnances ayant force de loi: en quelques sorte des pleins pouvoirs circonscrits dans le temps et le domaine⁹⁸³.

Par ailleurs, les textes discutés en séance plénière étaient des projets de lois. De plus, les dates des sessions étaient fixées par le Président de l'assemblée sur conseil du Président de la République. Au bureau de l'assemblée, la priorité était donnée aux textes à examiner venus de la Présidence de la République. Dans la pratique, cette prééminence de l'exécutif était encore plus marquante car la commission d'enquête ne fonctionnait presque pas. Ce "monopole" devait davantage s'affirmer au fil du temps.

En effet, en 1966, le Président Ahidjo organisa et réalisa la fusion des partis politiques, harcelant ceux des opposants qui n'en voulaient pas. Certains hommes politiques, de peur d'être mis de cote, acceptèrent la fusion. D'autres encore, craignant d'être accusés de subversion ou d'intelligence avec les upecistes, s'allièrent à la grande

⁹⁸³Gilbert Taguem Fah, "Les élites musulmanes et la politique au Cameroun de la période française à nos jours", thèse de 3e cycle, Université de Yaoundé I, 1995, pp. 108-110.

fusion. Il faut dire que dans cette entreprise, Ahidjo bénéficiait du soutien du bloc qui s'était constitué avec les élus du Nord et qui s'était bâti autour des cercles de réflexion d'associations locales. Parmi ces structures, nous avons : l'Association Amicale de la Bénoué et l'Evolution du Nord Cameroun créées par Ahidjo, l'Association Progressiste Sociale et Evolutive de Ngaoundéré créée par Nana Djafarou, l'Association Amicale des Musulmans du Diamare fondée par Sahili et Yaya Dahirou ...⁹⁸⁴ L'un des regroupements les plus élaborés a été sans conteste la Médiation Franco-Camerounaise (MEDIAFRANCAM) créée en 1955.⁹⁸⁵ Ce groupement, comme son nom l'indique, était francophile. Au fil du temps, le bloc autour d'Ahidjo s'était solidifié, notamment avec la majorité qu'il constituait dans les différentes assemblées. La prééminence qu'il avait obtenue à l'assemblée permit à ce groupe de contrôler le pouvoir exécutif, tout en lui donnant une marge d'action illimitée. Cet acte anéantit complètement le pouvoir législatif qui se vit ainsi phagocyté par l'exécutif et en devint le subordonné.

La fonction de control qui jouait un rôle important dans la culture parlementaire était complètement foulée du pied. A ce sujet, dans l'ouvrage intitulé *Le parlement au Cameroun hier et aujourd'hui*, 1946-1971 produit par l'assemblée, il est soutenu que la fonction de contrôle de l'assemblée n'est pas absolument nécessaire. Ces propos illustrent, s'il en était encore besoin, ce rejet et cette méprise volontaire sur la fonction de control de l'assemblée car ils stipulent qu'une mise en cause systématique de la politique du gouvernement par le parlement deviendrait, à la longue préjudiciable et à la stabilité de l'Etat et à l'efficacité de l'action gouvernementale. L'art du control s'exercera avec tact et opportunité.⁹⁸⁶

Il faut dire que ces opportunités étaient rares. V.T. Lainjo rapporte qu'il avait fait partie de l'une des rares commissions d'audit créée par l'assemblée mais au terme de leur enquête, le Président avait demandé

⁹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 124.

⁹⁸⁵Assemblée Nationale, *Le Parlement au Cameroun hier et aujourd'hui* (1946-1971), Yaoundé : Colouma, 1971, p. 78

⁹⁸⁶Entretien, avec V. T. Lainjo mere en aout 2004 à Buea,

les résultats et il n'avait plus jamais été question de ces rapports.⁹⁸⁷ Ainsi, dans ses ambitions d'unifier les deux territoires fédérés, Ahidjo et ses supporters avaient foulé du pied les libertés parlementaires, réduisant véritablement les pouvoirs de cette institution. Il faut dire que 'assemblée pouvait, par une motion de censure adoptée à la majorité des 213, pousser le gouvernement à la démission. Mais cela ne se produisit jamais. Cette pratique n'était pas l'exclusivité du Cameroun; plusieurs pays africains, se retrouvaient dans cette situation. A ce sujet, Thomas Goudou soutient que dans la plupart des pays africains surtout des anciennes colonies françaises, progressivement:

L'équilibre-collaboration des pouvoirs a été remplacée par la détention du pouvoir exécutif et du pouvoir législatif par un même parti et la responsabilité du gouvernement devant Le parlement est remplacé par celle du parti devant l'électorat.⁹⁸⁸

Ainsi, le parlement fonctionnait comme un auxiliaire de l'exécutif. Son rôle était négligeable; il exerçait ses pouvoirs sous le contrôle strict du Président qui avait la possibilité de requérir l'avis des populations par voie référendaire en se passant du parlement.

De façon générale, le parlement fédéral avait un pouvoir restreint et subalterne à l'exécutif pour ne pas dire au chef d'Etat, car beaucoup de chefs d'Etat africains étaient réfractaires au partage des pouvoirs et à la contradiction parlementaire.⁹⁸⁹

Le pouvoir du parlement devint quasi inexistant; toute la culture parlementaire acquise au Cameroun britannique se retrouvait noyée dans cette institution qui n'avait de parlement que de nom. La confiscation du pouvoir législatif arrangeait les intérêts de l'exécutif

⁹⁸⁷Thomas Goudou, *L'Etat, la politique et le Droit parlementaire en Afrique*, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1987, p. 101

⁹⁸⁸Assemblée Nationale, *Le Parlement au Cameroun*, p.78.

Conclusion

Il ressort de cette analyse que dans son extension et son dynamisme, le terme frontière a dépassé son sens premier qui était géographique, spatial, pour prendre une dimension nouvelle. La frontière marque la fin d'une idéologie, d'une culture, d'un système et le début de l'autre. Aussi avons-nous pu démontrer qu'il a bel et bien existe des frontières parlementaires entre le Cameroun anglophone et le Cameroun francophone. Ces frontières, conséquences de deux systèmes coloniaux différents qui ont été appliqués pendant près de quatre décennies dans les deux territoires du Cameroun, ne pouvaient être évacuées. Cependant, au moment de la réunification, des ambitions égoïstes ont ignoré cette pluralité qui aurait pu enrichir le parlement en mettant sur pied un parlement hybride, mais surtout original, pour fragiliser le pouvoir législatif en créant plusieurs assemblées aux pouvoirs ambiguës et plus tard une assemblée fédérale qui ne tenait pas sinon très peu compte de la culture parlementaire du Cameroun anglophone. En clair, sur le plan parlementaire, la réunification a été un échec. Cet échec explique l'inefficacité de notre assemblée aujourd'hui qui a vu ses pouvoirs diminuer au profit de l'exécutif.

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Noms et Prénoms	Âges	Professions et lieu de résidence	Date de l'entretien
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Ako Esambe Godfrey	73ans	Fonctionnaire retraité (Buéa,)	Du 07 au 10 août 2004
Lainjo Vincent Thomas		Ancien Député (Buéa)	Du 14 au 21 août 2004
Ngassam Thomas		Administrateur civil retraité (Yaoundé)	Du 06 juillet au 07 juillet 1998
Tafrey Ignatus	77ans	Fonctionnaire retraité (Bamenda)	Entretien à Buéa en août 1999
Tchaptchet Ernest	69ans	Geomètre retraité (Ngaoundéré)	janvier 2006

A Thank You Valediction

By
Verkijika G. Fanson

Introduction

The tradition of Festschrifts (that is, presenting papers of publishing a volume of articles as tribute to a scholar, often at the end of his/her career) and Valedictions (that is, farewell greetings on important occasions) are definitely Anglo-Saxon practices, and the University of Yaounde 1 already has a tradition of gedenkschrift, or posthumous presentation of papers or publication in memory of a departed colleague.

However, the tradition of Festschrift is already making headway in this University. I am thinking of the two most recent Festschrifts organized as tributes, one to Prof. Mbagwana of the English Department and the other to Prof. Chumbow of the Linguistics Department, on the occasion of their retirement from formal academic routines of this University. I am therefore one of the first few privileged academics of Yaounde 1 to be honoured by colleagues, former and current students, friends and admirers from within and outside Cameroon on the occasion of my retirement from formal active service.

It is befitting that on such an occasion, I should make a valedictory speech and bow out of official day-to-day academic engagements in the University of Yaounde 1. In this farewell speech, I will talk about the Department of History at the time I was recruited, I will talk about myself and my experiences before and during my very long career in Yaounde and also about things that I think should be looked into in order to move the University forward academically.

If I had been only a civil servant and not a senior don at the

University and the Ministry of Higher Education, I should have retired at least ten years ago on the occasion of reaching the official age of fifty-five. This Valediction is therefore properly a farewell to formal routines in the University where I may continue to serve as a part-timer after retirement; it is not goodbye to the Public Service that I should have left long ago.

My Immediate Preoccupations at Retirement

I know that when I say I might continue to serve on a part-time basis, the students who are still working with me on their researches, especially those already at advanced stages of their work or completing their doctoral degree programs, as well as colleagues with whom I am working on joint research projects, would be anxious to know whether I will say bye-bye to those projects and to them and turn my back to academics, or whether I would still be there and available. Many have been rushing to complete their theses, fearing that I am going away for good. I want to assure them that I am still there and available for as long as the Good Lord will continue to give me the energy to read and to continue working with them and also for as long as the University of Yaounde 1 continues to allow me to serve on a part-time basis. The Minister of Higher Education was re-assuring in the National Assembly on this issue of Emeritus Professors during the Question and Answer session a few weeks ago. Whatever the case, how could I go away completely so soon from academics that I have known and loved for so long a time? I will surely work with the research students I accepted to supervise within the expected time limit before going away.

In saying so, I am happy to state that after some sixty years at books, from the time I was enrolled in Infants One till date, including 36 years and 10 months of continuous studies, teaching, researching and publishing, I should really go away from active service at the University of Yaounde, as it was known when I was formally recruited on the 3rd of October 1974, or the University of Yaounde 1, as it has been known since 1993.¹ I really need to go away and rest!

The Department of History in 1974

When I started teaching here in 1974, there were hardly more than 40 students in the history degree or third year class and hardly more than 300 fresh men and women in History/Geography in the then lone 'Bilingual' University of Yaounde in the country. Today the History Department in Yaounde 1 alone has about 4,000 students and the Graduate Classes have more than 1000, with more than 600 of them in Level Four of the Masters' Program. This is in spite of the fact that there are now eight State Universities and countless other Private Universities and professional institutions offering history courses to countless number of students in Cameroon.

In 1974 there were hardly more than a few female students in the degree class and hardly more than ten in the whole History/Geography Department. The story is different today. The gender distribution in the Department of History is very much equal and, I understand, girls are outnumbering boys in some departments not only in Yaounde I, but also in the other State and Private Universities in the country. This indeed is a very wonderful development. That is surely clear evidence of the progress women have made towards becoming really emancipated and empowered in Cameroon. It is time that our womenfolk should rise and take up leadership in this and other Universities and, why not, in the country as a whole. But, in so saying, I must warn the boys not to allow the girls have more than 51% of the places in respect of the gender distribution of our national population. If you boys do, you will be completely subdued.

My Background

My career as a teacher did not begin at the University of Yaounde. Before coming to teach in this educational city, I had taught at both Elementary and Secondary School Levels. My path to scholarship began when I enrolled in Infants One as a pupil in 1950, not many years into my living age. This was a couple of years or so after the demise of my father, Chrysanthus Fanzo, from injuries sustained in a

motor accident on the famous Sabga Hill in Bamenda, leaving me and three siblings including twins who were barely two months old in the care of my widowed mother, Adela She-eh. When I graduated with a First School Leaving Certificate from St. Theresa's School (STS) Kumbo in December 1957,¹ I was unable to proceed to secondary school because there was no one to shoulder the responsibility of sponsorship.

A year later, in January 1959, I was appointed to teach as a very young probationary in a new unassisted Catholic Infants School on a salary of 2 British West African pounds a month, equivalent of 1,384 CFA, according to the exchange rate when that currency was introduced as replacement to the sterling in West Cameroon in 1962. At the end of the first month of teaching, I was transferred to a government assisted Catholic Standard Four School where my salary immediately doubled to four pounds. I saved much of my monthly earnings and had enough at the end of that year to pay my fees in college for two years, with only slight assistance from my family. Mark you that until 1964, the school year in the Federated State of West Cameroon followed the Gregorian calendar that ran from January to December.

The following year I sat for the entrance examination and gained admission into St. Peter's College Bambui to do two years (instead of three) to qualify for the Teachers' Grade Three Certificate. When I graduated at the end of 1961 I was posted to teach at my Alma Mater, STS, in Kumbo for one year before returning to Bambui for under two further years to qualify for the award of the Grade Two Certificate in June 1964.

I was then posted to teach at the Catholic Parish of Muyuka beginning in September 1964. It was while teaching in Muyuka (at Mpundu, Malende, and Muyuka town) that I embarked on studying for the GCE examinations that were run by the University of London mainly for the Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology (CCAST) Bambili and private candidates. In 1965 I wrote and passed the entrance into CCAST Bambili but waited to write the O/Level I had registered for before going to enrol. I had written and received assurances from CCAST in December that I would still be admitted if

I came before the end of January 1966. As soon as I finished my O/Level examination towards the end of January, I took off for Bambili without first going to explain to my School Manager that I was going away. A hasty send-off party was organised in my honour by colleagues and weeping pupils at Mpundu. I reached CCAST and took my place in the dormitory with many colleagues and friends from primary school and teachers' college and was ready for classes. I had not even sat in class when I was told that my enrolment had been stopped by the Catholic Mission that wanted me to go back immediately to my school at Mpundu or face the consequences. What an embarrassment and a shame to go back to the same school that had just given me a send-off a few days earlier!

I went to the Catholic Education Secretary in Bamenda and begged him to instead send me to any other school in the region. He was already fully informed about my recalcitrant behaviour and would not listen to my plea. The Church was powerful; I was powerless on my own to fight. After all, they were right; I was wrong. I returned to Muyuka and was advised by friends and ethnic compatriots to put aside my pride accept the shame and go back to the Mission. When I went to see the School Manager to report that I was back and ready to return to Mpundu, to my surprise, relief and delight, he instead sent me to Malende, where I started to teach again towards the end of February 1966.

I was barely two months in Malende when the GCE results were released in Buea in April and I passed in all the O/Level subjects I had written, including the English Language. When I sent my results to inform the Catholic Education Secretary in Buea as was required, I was immediately given two increments of salary and raised to the grade of Pivotal Teacher. I was very much encouraged and became more determined than ever before in my studies as a private GCE candidate. I bought books on the appropriate subjects to read and soon registered for three A/Level to write in January 1967, six months before my classmates in CCAST, who were to write in June. When the results were made public in Buea, I passed in two A/Level papers. At that time I was already teaching in the main Parish School at Muyuka. I gained two more increments and my salary rose to more than 30,000

francs a month. At the end of 1967 I was posted to teach at the prestigious St. Joseph's College Sasse near Buea. While in Sasse, I wrote three more A/Level, including the one I flunked in January 1967 and passed in another two papers, making a total of 4 A/Levels in two sittings. At that time in Nigeria and Southern Cameroons/West Cameroon, anyone who had at least two A/Levels plus O/Level English Language claimed to hold an inter-B.A. or inter-B.Sc., instead of claiming to qualify for direct entry into a University.

Following an application, I was invited by the Delegation of National Education at Buea to do a 2-week Practical Teaching Examination at BTTC Soppo Buea for the Teachers' Grade One Certificate, which was awarded in 1969. In early 1970 I gained a Canadian International Development Agency scholarship with six other Cameroonians, including my childhood friend, colleague and office mate in the Department of History of this University, the late Professor Bongfen Chem-Langhee, to study at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

My University Studies and Career

We left for Canada in early September 1970 and began our studies in the Faculty of Education and in various Departments of our main subjects by the end of that month. After my first degree in Education with History and Anthropology as principal subjects, I gained admission into the Graduate School of the University of Birmingham and left for England to study at the Centre of West Africa Studies. I was awarded an M.A. degree in History in September 1974 and decided to return to Cameroon. On arrival in Yaounde, I contacted the Department of History and was invited to teach two courses to Second and Third Year classes on part-time basis while my application for recruitment to teach full time was being processed.

During the close-to-thirty-seven years of my teaching career in this University, I rose from the rank of Instructor, through those of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor to full Professor. The Public Service had integrated me as a civil servant into the administration of Higher Education and Scientific and Technical

Research from the date of my recruitment in the University in October 1974. It was while teaching that I earned my final degree, Doctorat d'Etat, that was completed in 1982 defended and awarded summa cum laude in April 1983.

Shortly after I started teaching, I decided to get married. The lady I met and proposed to (then Miss Ancella Bongmoyong Tah) accepted and we were married in the Civil Status Registry in Kumbo in December 1975 and in the Catholic Church in March 1976. We have been together ever since and have been blessed with three children who are grown-ups and are independent. I am grateful to the Almighty for giving me a wonderful and loving family, especially my wife who has been my closest friend and confidant.

The History Syllabus in Yaounde

When I started teaching in Yaounde, the history and other degree courses lasted three years, followed by an optional one-year of post-graduate studies for the Diplome d'Etude Supérieur (DES). The program was soon changed and the Maitrise degree that was open to all holders of the first degree replaced the DES. Soon after, a two-year Master's degree (equivalent of Doctorat de 3e Cycle) was introduced. This too was soon replaced by the Doctorat de 3em Cycle proper, followed by the Doctorat d'Etat as the highest research degree open only to members of the academic staff of the University. All these have since been replaced by the current LMD that ends with the Doctorat/PhD.

The syllabus for undergraduate courses then was divided into compulsory (Trunk Commun) and elective. The examination usually consisted of one question from a number of compulsory or elective courses. The results were based on the average mark obtained in all the courses that included history, inter-disciplinary subjects and Bilingual Formation. It was possible under that system for a student to graduate from Yaounde with a history degree without ever passing a real history course. Efforts to reform without the approval of Government were vehemently resisted by the old establishment. Changes eventually began when the idea of multiple questions at examinations for the

student to select and answer one or two was accepted. The system has evolved to what is today the LMD.

Links with Other Universities

During the close-to-four decades that I have been here, I also established academic and research contacts with other (national and foreign) institutions of higher learning and went to teach or research there. I was Guest Professor at the University of Hamburg in Germany during the whole Spring Semester in 1989, African Rhodes Chair Fellow at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom from April to September 1996, Visiting Scholar at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, in the US from September to December 1997, Visiting Scholar at Grinnell College in Iowa in September and October 2004, Fulbright Scholar at Trident Technical College in South Carolina from August to December 2005, and African Fellow at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom from October 2009 to March 2010. I visited many other Universities and taught at IRIC in Yaounde II, the University of Buea and ENS-Annex Bambili that now belongs to the University of Bamenda. I was also Vice Dean in the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences from 1993 to 1997, and Director of Cultural Heritage in the Ministry of Culture from 1995 to 1999.

The Teaching of Cameroon History in Yaounde

During the years before I was recruited to teach in Yaounde, neither Cameroon nor African history was really taught in the Department. Cameroon did not even feature much in the GCE and Baccalaureate syllabuses in Secondary and High Schools. All that was taught was European, Asian and North American history. My first course to Third Year students (graduating class) in 1974-75 was on the scramble for and the colonization of Cameroon, which the students found amazing and intriguing. It should not have been news to teach the history of Cameroon in a Cameroonian University. The students were perplexed because they had not done Cameroon before, except a course on the politics of President Ahmadou Ahidjo that was taught by

Mr. Adalbert Owona. The syllabus had to be modified to include courses on Cameroon and African history. The problem was books, although Professor Engelbert Mveng's *Histoire du Cameroun* had been published and was available. It was this situation that forced me to start thinking seriously about an introductory book on Cameroon history would be useful to both secondary school students and freshmen and women enrolling in universities. That history was published by Macmillan Publishers in Basingstoke and London in 1989. I am happy that the history of Cameroon and Africa are now given priority in our secondary school and university syllabuses.

Lamentations

Much has changed for the better in the University of Yaounde 1. But there are still a number of things I have found disturbing over the decades that need to be looked into and corrected in order to improve on the image of the institution. One of these is the difficulty for members of academic staff to carry out research work and publish. This is because the academic year runs all year long and because of too many students, too few teachers and too much time spent on assessments. It is also because there is no University Bookshop and no University Library that is worth the name in Yaounde 1. Imagine how long it takes an instructor who has two main courses in the undergraduate classes (Levels One to Three) of more than 1,000 students each to grade a single history assignment set, mark and grade an examination at the end of semester before devoting time to personal research work! That is why examination results in large departments like History are never ready before the vacation and even before the re-sits in September. That is why it is difficult to know which students qualify for admission into the higher levels when the new academic year begins in October and even up to the end of the First Semester in February. When can a teacher who teaches and corrects assignments and examinations all year long find time for research? How long would it take such scholars to have enough really good publications to change a rank? It is for this reason that many go on for year without ever changing their status until retirement. Something should be done to facilitate research in this and other state Universities.

The second thing is the difficulty of the Departments and the Faculty establishing an identifiable character. Everything seems to be on experiment, and at the whims and caprices of the person in authority. The University Texts proposed and adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education mean nothing at all to anyone, including the Minister, the Rector, the Dean and the Head of Department simply because each wants his/her personal authority to be felt. This is evident when it comes, for example, to matters of promotion and appointment into academic and administrative positions in the University. The University text of 1993 that were established by Presidential Decree stipulate clearly that only people with certain qualifications, grade and longevity be appointed to certain positions. That has meant nothing to those who make the appointments. One of such texts signed on 19th January 1993 that has never meant anything at all concerns those who should be appointed Heads of Department. The person, the text says, shall be appointed by the Minister in Charge of Higher Education upon the recommendation of the Rector and the Faculty following the recommendations of the Assembly of the Department sitting without the participation of the students. Has it ever been respected in Yaounde 1 or any other State University? I wonder! Do not misunderstand me as clamouring for appointment on the day of my departure from the University. No, not at all! I have never and cannot now clamour for appointment even if I still had time.

The third disturbing thing is the opening of the Masters Studies to everyone with a first degree, no matter the grade, without enough instructors to 'encadrer' them. This has inundated the popular departments. The number of students in the Graduate Programs (Master's and Doctoral) in the Department of History, for example, does not match the number of instructors who qualify ... to give courses and supervise their researches, dissertations and theses. A few who qualify to supervise are over-worked and can hardly be effective. Imagine how much time a conscientious instructor supervising more than twenty Master's (accumulated) and six doctoral students a year and having a heavy teaching load would have for each student and for his own research! Many supervisors hardly sit down to discuss with each research student more than once before he or she completes the

study for defence.

The fourth is the absence of real professional and moral consciousness among the teaching corps of the Faculty generally and the Department of History particularly. There are few instructors who bother to teach their courses or to give and properly grade assignments. Courses that are supposed to be taught by two instructors are either left to one instructor who teaches for only a few weeks and then stops because the other colleague does not teach. This is particularly the case with instructors holding positions of appointment. Yet everyone fills the form to claim all the assigned hours at the end of the semester. I also recently learned that some instructors openly pressure students they are supervising to give them envelopes with specified sums before signing authorization for them to deposit their dissertations and defend. If it is true, such a forced envelope cannot be considered a “thank you” from the concerned student; it is nothing but extortion, one of the worst forms of corruption.

Another regrettable thing is that Bilingual Formation does not seem to be helping history research students very much to read and cite sources in the other official language. Hardly do students writing in French consult documented sources in English or those writing in English consult sources in French, including the works of their instructors known to them. It is time to insist that a student writing a memoir or dissertation or thesis in French or English must consult a certain number of primary and secondary sources in the other language, besides translating the abstract or resume into the other language.

Let me now lament about something that concerns not this country alone but the whole continent, namely, the problem of democracy and leadership in contemporary Africa. It is inconceivable that fifty years after the majority of countries acceded to independence, Africa is still without an acceptable political formula that can unite the different ethnic groups in the country, institutionalize democracy to take care of free and fair elections, and change leader that have outlived their usefulness but would not just go away. The principal reason for the failure is to be found in the make-up of each country, especially in sub-Saharan Africa: a conglomeration of ethnic groups

and cultural tradition that inadvertently lays the first claim to the loyalty, sense of belonging and identity of its members before their loyalty to the country. Each ethnic entity wants to maintain its identity, claim the leadership of the governing party and the loyalty of everyone else wholly. They would not relinquish power for any reason because this is their time and their right to be. This is because political parties and foreign ideologies that were introduced not to compete with or as success institutions to any system that existed during the colonial times. Neither traditional nor colonial governmental systems were based on political parties. For this reason, the idea of government and opposition, which are the mark of genuine democracy in the West, was “tribalized” before Africans were educated about how to manage it.

The process of democratization in sub-Saharan Africa particularly has been that of one step forward, two steps backward. At independence virtually; all the countries practiced what seemed to be a healthy multi-party democracy. Within a few years of independence, however, multipartyism had crumbled almost everywhere and one-party or military dictatorships instituted. Before the end of the 1980s both the one-parties and military regimes were being discredited everywhere. But instead of adopting something new, the old multiparty; systems with their weaknesses intact were again being adopted. This time, however, there were feeble attempts to limit the elective leadership at the helm c the state to a single term renewable once. But once it became clear that the renewed mandates were coming to an end, the incumbent leaders began to initiate constitutional revisions, claiming that a limitation of mandate infringed the democratic rights of citizens to choose who they want to continue to lead them This was the case in Nigeria, Zambia, Malawi, Chad and Cameroon, to name only these few; this has been the preoccupation of many African heads of state that have been in power for more than two terms. Now they are being forced to quit by the West that is just too ready to support any up-rising against entrenched leadership.

The time has come for African scholars and researchers to propose a formula for choosing leaders to govern, which overrides the overwhelming influence of ethnicity and is convenient and acceptable to all. I am thinking of a political system of selection and governance

based on interests and concerns that run across various divides in each country. Of course the formula should take into account permanent interests such as ethnic communities and ad hoc interests such as trade and professional unions formed across ethnic borders. The advantage in such a system is that unlike a political party, an individual can belong to more than one ad hoc group at the same time without guilt, particularly as the purpose is the promotion of the interests of the members of the group. The democratic election of individuals to positions of authority without resorting to ethnic particularities in such a system would also be organized. All recognized traditional authorities in the country would play roles of state agents in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

The importance of the African political formula is to be found in the bloody ethnic conflicts that have ravaged many countries following general and presidential elections (flawed or otherwise), and in the leaders who have been in power for decades but refuse to go away pretending that their people still need them. Kenya that was regarded as one of the leading multi-party democracies in the continent showed how fragile party politics continues to be in multi-ethnic countries during their recent elections. The leadership in Cote d'Ivoire that promised to introduce real democracy in the country refused to accept clear defeat in the polls and had to be ousted by force of arms after the whole world recognized the victory of the opposition. I do not need to talk about what is happening now in North Africa or what has been going on in Zimbabwe. Africa really needs a democratic formula that beats the imposed Western multi-party system of governance. Academics have the responsibility to propose and to push for the adoption of such a formula.

The Distortion of Cameroon History

Let me come back home to lament about what is becoming of the history of Cameroon that we write or read about in some books and teach to our students today - history that is devoid of facts and the science of historiography. Many students are much influenced by what is in such books and by what politicians are saying and by whatever

else they read in current newspapers. “The principal substance, the essential material of which history is made”, says the scholar philosopher Bernard Nsokika Fonlon in *To Every African Freshman or the Nature, End and Purpose of University Studies*, “is the corpus of events ... which determine the course of subsequent events and constitute landmarks, turning points, in the onward march of... that nation.” The historian who writes about his or any community or country without taking into account all the available facts before discarding what is irrelevant is writing false history. The omission of pertinent facts can distort history. And there is much distorted history around nowadays! That which makes history the scholar Fonlon says, is truth, without which there can be no history. Truth hastens to add, is inseparable from fact because both are what happened, which was, what is, or what exists.

There is so much doubtful history of this country since independence that no one knows what we are leaving for posterity. Some of us fear to write factual history because it might jeopardize an appointment or a position. Take, for example, the issue of dates in the history of Cameroon since reunification in 1961, and the Anglophone Problem. How much have we distorted these two issues in the history of this country? What do the dates 1st January, 11 the February, 20th May and 1st October represent in our history? Some political authorities are trying to assign their own events to these dates that have no link whatever to what happened. Read what some have written about the Anglophone Problem in the name of history or what politicians say about the issue without an iota of reality simply because they want to impress the powers that be for whatever reason. Regrettable! Such distorted history cannot help this country to unite, or to advance and develop.

We must also desist from writing what might turn out to be defamatory and blackmail history that is intended to damage a person's good reputation or character unfairly. I have read so much of such history recently even from scholar that I have respected and credited as good historians. Let me take one very controversial issue concerning one founding father, nationalist and statesman of modern Cameroon, namely Dr. John Ngu Foncha, former Prime Minister of Southern

Cameroons and of West Cameroon and former Vice President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. It is about him and the Fouban Constitutions Conference of 1961.

I have regularly advised my students never to write anything in the name of history or about an individual without concrete/hard evidence, without the facts; never to write anything that might turn out to be defamatory for want of authentic evidence. I wrote in my college history book, volume one, published in 1989 that the kinds of information contained in history are specified by the terms ‘fact’, ‘inference’ and ‘opinion’¹. “An ‘opinion’ is a personal or individual judgment or conclusion identical in kind to an inference but not based or grounded on complete knowledge. An opinion must be supported by facts to be substantiated.... An ‘inference’ is a conclusion or judgment stating relationships between facts”. It is an interpretation of facts. “A ‘fact’ is something that is known and accepted as having happened and is true”. Professor Victor Julius Ngoh, confirming what he wrote in 1990, says in an interview in Summit Magazine of April-June 2011, pages 12-14, that “it is true” that Foncha received but refused to present the proposed draft constitution from La Republique du Cameroun “to his Anglophone peers” at the Bamenda Conference of June 1961 that was convened to discuss what would be presented at the Fouban Conference of 17-21 July 1961. According to the professor, “Foncha decided to hide this draft constitution from Southern Cameroonian politicians because he had already made a deal with Ahidjo” to be Vice President if the plebiscite was in favour of reunification. His sources for this information are interviews with ST. Muna, N.N. Mbile and Moussa Yaya. This interview is not only full of contradictions but also short of credible evidence, of hard facts. Would Muna have told him that in 1990? I doubt; would Mbile? Perhaps; he was opposed to reunification; would Moussa Yaya? Perhaps; he was Ahidjo’s man.

Are there other sources that might contain authentic information about the issue? Oh, yes, there are! But before I get to that, the first thing to bear in mind is that this is not an issue that we can rely only on oral sources for factual information. It is an issue between two governments, in the age of writing, which should have a written

document about it somewhere. An official constitutional document in early 1961 from the President of La Republique du Cameroun to the Head of Government, the Prime Minister of Southern Cameroons, had to be transmitted officially with evidence of transmission at the source in Yaounde, and evidence of receipt at the terminal point in Buea. Neither of these two credible sources seems to contain such information.

Secondly, the draft constitution from Yaounde in 1961 was likely to be in French (as it was at Foumban), a language that Foncha neither read nor understood. But Foncha had as Assistant Secretary in his office, Dr. (later Professor) Bernard Nsokika Fonlon, who was not only quite versed in spoken and written French, but was also in the Southern Cameroons Delegation at Foumban as translator/interpreter. The Prime Minister would certainly have asked Fonlon to translate or interpret such a document for him to read before hiding it. The Conference at Foumban was extended from two to five days to allow the Anglophone delegation time to have the document translated and studied before the joint discussion. Fonlon would surely have fallen back to an earlier translation if he had done it. He spoke and wrote much about the re-unification but never ever mentioned about such a document before Bamenda and Foumban. He was not a man to hide such information.

Thirdly, Professor Ngoh did not find time to interview Foncha on the issue during a period of nine years from when he first made the claim before the latter's demise in 1999 in order to hear from the horse's own mouth; he did not interview Foncha's Private Secretary or any other person close to Foncha to get concrete information. Some people who interviewed and asked Foncha the question directly say that the statesman denied ever receiving such a document before the Bamenda Conference. I did interview Dr. Foncha myself long before 1990 but did not ask him the question as it never came in our discussion.

No Southern Cameroonian participant at the Constitutional Conference declared when they returned that Foncha had received but refused to show them the document before Bamenda and Foumban. Professor Ngoh says that "when they got to Foumban, they were

surprised when they wanted to present their own draft for discussion. Ahmadou Ahidjo said no! I have already given draft to Foncha and that is what, we are going to discuss now” (emphasis ii mine). What arrogance! Whatever, Ahidjo did not say ‘I had given’; he said ‘have given’, when? at Foumban? If the 25-man Southern Cameroons Delegation to Foumban could accommodate such arrogance, then they were dumber than Foncha who the professor claims was corrupt because he was bribed with the position of Vice President of the would-be Federal Republic to hide the document. Quite much of the professor’s interview on the issue of Foncha and the Foumban Conference of 1961 lacks credibility; many of his statements on some other issues in this same interview are controversial. Students, beware!

Tribute to Members of Department

Before I conclude this valediction, let me talk about the people (present and past with whom I have worked closely these several decades. I would like to begin by paying tribute to the various Heads of Department who were my bosses. The first is Professor Martin Z. Njeuma who was appointed just before my recruitment and who facilitated my being recruited. The second is Reverend Professor Engelbert Mveng who succeeded Professor Njeuma in 1983. Father Mveng was succeeded by Professor Joseph Marie Essomba in 1993. When Archaeology was separated from History and Professor Essomba became Head of that Section Professor Daniel Abwa was named to succeed him as Chair of History in 1998 Professor Abwa was in turn succeeded by Professor Philippe Blaise Essomba the current Chair, in 2009. These were and have been wonderful people to work with. It is regrettable that some of them and other colleagues I knew and worked closely with in the Department have passed on to eternity.

I am thinking of: Rev. Professor Engelbert Mveng, the first doyen of the Department, first full professor and former Chair of History; Dr. Maurice Mveng Ayi who was Vice Dean in the Faculty when I was recruited; Mr Adalbert Owona who was ever friendly; Professor Leon Kaptue who was recruited at the same time with me and with whom I shared office for a very long time; Mr Wang Sone who was a former

student and later a colleague; Professor Bongfen Chem-Langhee who was more of a brother from childhood and with : whom I went to the same schools and shared much in common. Prof. Chem-Langhee and I shared the same office for six years before his demise and we also often researched and published together. The last is Professor Martin Z. Njeuma who died last year, who was former Dean of the Faculty. Professor Njeuma contributed enormously to the growth of the Department and was my internal thesis supervisor for the top-most academic degree of this University.

Perhaps I have left out the names of some who have died without my knowledge. Could we, please, stand up for a minute's silence for the repose of the souls of these scholars! May they all rest in peace, Amen!

My relationship with these departed colleagues and with other colleagues who have retired or who are still in the Department to this present moment of my retirement was and has been exceptionally wonderful. Professor Dikoume at the University of Douala who was recruited at the same time with me and the late Kaptue is still a close friend, and I am grateful for it.

My Pride in this Noble Profession

My greatest pride in this noble teaching profession is that nearly all my colleagues in the Department of History during the last two decades or so were my former students. You will not believe it when I say that during the first eighteen years of my teaching career at the University of Yaounde, I taught some students that I had taught in class in primary and secondary schools. They had progressed; I too had progressed. I see and meet my students everywhere I go in Cameroon and abroad. What else could be more gratifying for a teacher than that? During the many decades of teaching at this University, I like to say proudly that I never discriminated between students on the bases of gender, ethnic, cultural, social or political divisions that exist in the department and in the country. I always saw and thought of each student in my class and office as myself sitting there in front of my own professor. In that way I learned to understand and was able to

determine a serious from an adventurous student. I also tried as much as possible to work in harmony with each and every colleague in the Department. I may surely have offended some. If I did, that was inadvertent and I ask for their forgiveness.

A Word of Thanks and Conclusion

I do not have the appropriate words to thank those colleagues in the Department of History who thought of and did everything to organize this festschrift. A thing like this is usually the idea and initiative of one or a few individuals, usually former students or colleagues or research partners or academic friends, but executing it is always the work of many hands. No scholar organizes his or her own festschrift. This festschrift was initiated when I was away on fellowship at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. I unofficially became aware of its seriousness not long ago and waited to be informed and invited like others.

I would like to thank the Chair of History, Professor Philippe Blaise Essomba, who supported the idea and allowed it to be organized in the Department. I understand he not only supported but cooperated wonderfully with the organizing team. I thank the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, Professor Laurent Omgba, who, I learn, when informed about it supported the initiative whole-heartedly. Mr Dean, Sir, it has been wonderful being a long serving member of your establishment.

I very much thank the initiators of the idea, the organizers and everyone who contributed in whatever way to bring it to fruition. It is difficult to know, from behind the screen, everyone who contributed to the success of such an endeavour. I have been indirectly informed about each and every one of you who distributed appeals and invitation letters, solicited support, put in your personal finances and also participated in the numerous meetings and radio and television discussions of me. But permit me to mention a few, just a few colleagues by name. I particularly wish to thank Prof. Abwa, the former Dean of the Faculty, who accepted to chair the event in spite of his numerous responsibilities at the Rectorate, Prof. Temgoua who has

been in it from the very beginning to the end, editing contributions to the festschrift and chairing preparatory meetings, Dr. Fomin with whom I share office, who tried to hide the idea from me until the right moment and who sort of held the relay baton in organizing and editing, Prof. Samuel Efoua Mbozo'o, Prof. David Zeitlyn, Prof. Giovanni Pampanini, and Donald West of Charleston in South Carolina, Dr. Niba, Dr. Enokenwa, Dr. Ndobegang, Dr. Henry Kah Jick of the University of Buea, Dr. Edith Tegna, Dr. Eric Fofack and the indefatigable Dr Dze-Ngwa who ran errands, raised funds, scheduled meetings, shuttled between Yaounde and Bamenda for the festschrift book and was always handy for the wonderful leadership the team needed in this exercise.

I sincerely thank Mr Tanlaka Kilian Lamtur and Madam Marie Asa'a, who translated this valediction into French. I thank all my current and former research students for what they did to spread the idea and to harness support. I know what it takes to organize a thing like this from a recent experience of a festschrift Dr. Ian Fowler of Oxford and I handled for Shirley Ardener also of Oxford. The book of that festschrift was launched in March 2009 at the University of Buea where she visits occasionally.

I feel humbled by this great act of honour. I will never ever forget about it for as long as I live. Thank you all; thank you very much. Goodbye.

“THIS IS A BRILLIANT AND INSPIRING BLUEPRINT OF CAREFULLY RESEARCHED WORK, INCISIVELY EXPRESSED IN THEMATIC SYNTHESIS. THE CONTRIBUTIONS ARE LIVELY, THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND CAPTURE IN BREADTH AND DEPTH, THE SCIENTIFIC INTEREST OF PROFESSOR V.G. FANSO... THE BOOK UNDOUBTEDLY IS A BEDROCK OF ORIGINAL AND DYNAMIC REFLECTIONS SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH TO GIVE A PLURAL IDEA OF THE CONCEPT OF FRONTIERS IN AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY”

MATHEW B. GWANFOGBE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF BAMENDA, CAMEROON

“THIS BOOK ... IS A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO BOUNDARY ISSUES, A KEY NOTION IN BOTH POLITICAL HISTORY AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION,”

PROFESSOR GIOVANNI PAMPANINI, HONORARY PRESIDENT, AFRICE, STUDIO INTERDISCIPLINARE DI SCIENZE SOCIALI E UMANE, CATANIA, ITALY

This book compromises 26 well-researched essays in honour of Professor Verkijika G. Fanzo, who retired in 2011 after over 36 years of distinguished service at universities in Cameroon. Contributors include colleagues, former students and close collaborators in Cameroon and beyond. Contributions cover a wide range of issues related to the contested histories, politics and practices of boundaries and frontiers in Africa. These are themes on which Fanzo has researched, published and taught extensively, and earned international recognition as a leading scholar. The book explores, inter alia, indigenous and endogenous practices of boundary making in Africa; as well as colonial and contemporary traditions, practices and conflicts on and around frontiers. In particular focus, are disputed colonial boundaries between Cameroon and its neighbours. Issues of intra- and inter-disciplinary frontiers, politics and cultures are also addressed. The volume is crowned by a farewell valedictory lecture by Fanzo. Like Fanzo and his rich repertoire of publications, this bumper harvest of essays is without doubt, truly immortalising.

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